

# fifth estate

Summer 2017

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THE SHOOTING IN SEATTLE  
CP & SM

MUSIC & REVOLUTION  
Luis Chávez

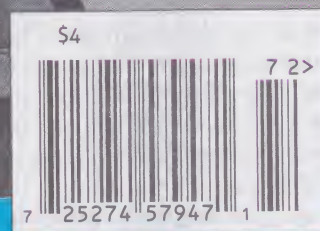
ANARCHISTS & SOCIAL SECURITY  
Eric Laursen

REVOLT, NOT REVOLUTION  
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## Revolutions, Revolts, Riots & Rebellions



BODY CAMS & THE TOTAL SURVEILLANCE STATE



# LETTERS **Our readers respond**

Send letters to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220  
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length

## A HUMAN FACE

Thank you to the comrades of the *Fifth Estate* for publishing John Clark's review and remembering my father so fondly. (See Winter 2017 FE, "Sam Dolgoff: A life at the center of American anarchism for seventy years.")

Although Sam never wavered in his belief that anarcho-syndicalism was the best approach, the old boy was not as rigid as some critics maintain. He lived in several communes, called himself an anarcho-communist, i.e., communalist, at times.

Sam preferred the term libertarian socialist before the term libertarian became polluted by the reactionaries, because he felt anarchist carried too much baggage.

He was keenly aware that the changes in technology and society in general dictated new forms of protest and revolt. He said future protesters may never have heard of anarchism, but that their demands would take that form because the ideals are universal.

One of my aims was to put a human face on anarchists and anarchism. So much slander, so much misrepresentation by the right and authoritarian left and by crackpots who expropriate the name!

I wish our dear friend Federico Arcos were alive to read and, no doubt, criticize my effort!

**In solidarity**  
**Anatole Dolgoff**  
**New York City**

**Fifth Estate replies:** As our reviewer wrote, Anatole's biography of his father's life, *Left of the Left: My Memories of Sam Dolgoff*, AK Press, spanned almost all of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and intersected with many of the great struggles of that era.

Also, so many well known historic fig-



ures walked through Sam's life including Federico Arcos (1920-2015) who was a friend and comrade to all of us in the *Fifth Estate* editorial group.

Knowing Federico, we are certain his only response would have been tears of joy at such a wonderful celebration of his dear friend and comrade.

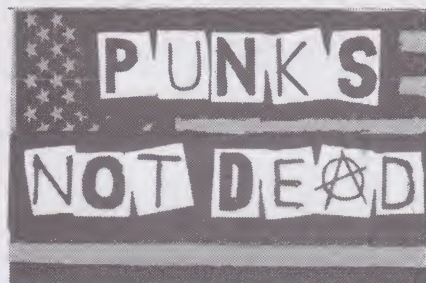
## PRISON DIY

Enclosed are stickers I made and enjoy sharing with like-minded brothers and sisters. (See below.)

I made these in the prison license plate shop where I work. Done in true guerrilla DIY style with state resources and on the sneak (technically contraband). Pardon the chemical smell if any lingers.

**Name, prison, and state withheld.**

**Fifth Estate reply:** The chemical odor was pungent, but worth it to see the ingenuity of people expressing a desire for freedom even under the most repressive conditions.



## HOW DISAPPOINTING

Wow, Fifth Estate. You've really outdone yourself this time.

Actually, you've even outdone the alt-right, with the recent article you published that defends cultural appropriation. [See "Cultural Appropriation & Shaming: Dreads & Mohawks: To Whom Do They Belong?" by Rod Dubey, *Fifth Estate*, Winter 2017.

It's basically the same argument Milo Yiannopoulos makes. What a joke. How disappointing to see that you would publish something so ignorant and hurtful.

It isn't that hard to understand that if someone tells you your behavior is deeply offensive to them, and you're trying to be their allies, that you might want to consider stopping it.

Please educate yourself on this topic before publishing any more trash like this, or consider finding an editor who knows what the fuck is going on in radical thought these days.

Ashamed, now, to be receiving your magazine.

**Unsigned**

**Rod Dubey replies:** Even a cursory knowledge of culture shows that it is always evolving as people learn from and build on what has come before, including that which comes from other cultures. My article uses this fact to challenge the right of white commodity culture to suck up every other culture and claim ownership.

It also uses it to challenge any idea that we can or should try to halt culture, extract its threads, and make counter-claims of ownership over them, and to then shame allies for non-conformity.

Surely that approach is more consistent with Marxism-Leninism than anarchism.

More letters on Page 45



# Revolting!

We took on the theme of Revolution, Revolts, Riots, and Rebellions even before the candidates were chosen by the major parties for the US election.

As we say in these pages, social explosions are generated by the oppressive nature of the state itself, and of the economies it has always protected—from early slave society, through feudalism, and into capitalism.

The importance of the anarchist perspective, what our Italian and Spanish comrades have called, The Ideal, is to give shape to what is inchoate; that there must be a new world in our hearts that goes beyond an expression of rage to creating a matrix for true freedom.

Here you will find articles that address those ideas and concerns in a number of ways, and we welcome your responses in letters to the editors.

This issue follows our Winter 2017 edition. We hope you find the articles as engaging as we did while editing them. Thank you to everyone who participated in the writing, editing, and production, and to our readers, subscribers, and Sustainers.

New subscribers and subscription renewals are at an all time high reflecting the times in which we live, and the engagement with the ideas that can animate the revolutionary movement in which we are involved.

**fifth  
estate**

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## It's all connected

Growing numbers of people compelled to flee their homes because of ongoing devastations of wars, cataclysmic climate change, and intractable environmental crises! It's not a Hollywood sci-fi horror movie—it's the world of industrialization and capitalism. As the system grinds on, it continues to multiply threats to all living creatures on the planet.

Last year, the 22nd Session of the UN climate conference

(the Conference of the Parties--COP22) issued a report delineating "the last chance our species has of halting the trajectory of environmental disaster." It noted that, at the minimum, there needs

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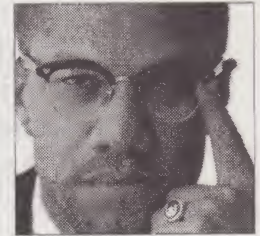
Cover: Occupy Wall Street, Zuccotti Park, NYC 2011, MTT mttphoto.com



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A still from a YouTube video at the moment an IWW member was shot by a supporter of alt-right provocateur, Milo Yiannopoulos.

## How will it be resolved? By the State or with Restorative Justice?

# An Anarchist is Shot in Seattle

CP & SM

**A**n unarmed protester is shot by a right-winger and the wounded anarchist does not want to rely on the punitive power of the state. What are the alternatives?

On the night of Donald Trump's inauguration, January 20, Hex, an IWW organizer, street medic and anarchist, was shot and severely wounded at a protest against Milo Yiannopoulos's speaking engagement at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle.

The alt-right provocateur and serial harasser was invited by the campus College Republicans, although the university administration had been warned for months by students, workers, and professors there would inevitably be violence if the event took place.

A few hours after the shooting, Marc Hokoana and his wife Elizabeth turned themselves in to the police, claimed self-defense, and were released later that same night without charges.

The shooting comes within the context of increased right-wing violence and threats on the UW campus. Hex declined to press charges and instead says he wishes to pursue restorative justice, focusing on the rehabilitation of the perpetrator through reconciliation with the victim and the community at large.

In an interview on Seattle radio station KEXP, Hex explained his stance as inspired by an understanding of personal responsibility and a commitment to prison abolition, tied into the responsibility his shooter disregarded by shooting him.

As anarchists, we share with Hex a commitment to the

abolition of prisons, and honor his extraordinary courage in his insistence on seeing his shooter as a human being. In view of the local wave of fascist threats and violence, however, we propose that taking account of the relationships not just between Hex and his shooter, but of all the relationships affected by this fascist upswing around the college, might suggest a different approach.

Here's the background of the events:

Several hours before the January 20 event, Yiannopoulos supporters gathered on Red Square, outside the campus venue. The crowd grew to several hundred, ranging from curious students to veteran neo-nazi organizers. Many local anarchists and other radicals were a few miles away from the widely publicized event at a march downtown, leaving fewer than a hundred anti-fascist protesters on the Square, of which perhaps thirty were masked.

About one hundred right-wing supporters got into the hall where Yiannopoulos was scheduled to speak. Then, protesters blocked the entrances, leaving them face to face with some 700 enraged Milo supporters. Scattered fist fights broke out between the two groups and objects flew in both directions. Not long after the event started in a largely empty hall, and an hour later, a large contingent from the downtown march arrived. A cheer went up from the anti-fascist protesters, while the Milo supporters looked about in concern as the balance shifted.

In the midst of the confusion, a muffled pop was heard. Hex, who had been de-escalating confrontations in the crowd, was shot in the stomach by one of the Hokoanas, likely Marc, and lay curled in a gathering pool of his own blood.

The police surrounding the square did not leave their positions despite acknowledging the shooting. Only after several minutes was a small golf cart sent to take the victim to an ambulance.



## Can restorative justice be effective with people who commit transgressions but don't share the community's values?

Within days, videos surfaced showing the shooting had been clearly premeditated, with Elizabeth's hand on a holster under her coat, and Marc telling her, "Don't shoot anybody yet!... They have to start it!"

At the time of this writing, criminal charges have still not been filed against the shooter. The University administration has not issued a condemnation of the shooting, only saying that the president is "heartbroken" that it occurred, with the repeated implication that protesters were at least as much to blame as the shooter himself.

The morning after the shooting, the emboldened campus Republicans released a statement, threatening more of the same: "Antifa, Anarchists, violent political agitators... it's time your flame is put out."

The same day, alt-right online forums released identifying information about the organizers of a teach-in that preceded the protest, who soon received messages containing homophobic and transphobic slurs as well as sexual and death threats.

One graduate student instructor advised the administration that a self-identified white supremacist student threatened to shoot her and her class. Campus staff, after a conversation with her, dismissed her concerns.

Even after her car windows were smashed days later, the administration dismissed any suggestion that the incident could be related to the threats. She subsequently quit the graduate program, explaining that, "a PhD isn't worth getting shot for."

Less than a week after the shooting, a group calling itself the UW Wall Builders called for supporters to bring bricks to the school's main square to "build [our] own wall on campus." The group previously issued a poll asking: "Illegal aliens must be a) physically removed, so to speak, b) sent to the concentration camps, c) sent to daddy Richard's study for 'further discipline,' d) sent over Trump's big beautiful wall."

At the pro-wall event, police surrounded the student organizer to protect him from protesters as he gave an interview to local news media. Days later, the same person walked into the campus Q(ueer) Center displaying an illegal six-inch knife, but faced no reprimand from the University.

On February 15, during a performance of a Shakespeare play in which the leading actors were people of color, a campus theater was glued over with posters proclaiming, "Drive out the sodomites and degenerates of Seattle: Yellow, Black and Brown. Look out! The Nazis have come to town!"

Campus police commander Steve Rittereiser responded with glowing approval, and advised those who didn't like it to take responsibility for their own safety: "Putting up handbills is certainly legal. We want people to be able to promote freedom of expression and freedom of thought," he continued.

Away from the campus, a disturbing wave of racist attacks occurred. A number of both Jewish and Islamic places of worship have been threatened and attacked. One mosque was burned to the ground. In a neighboring town, authorities are investigating what looks to be a recent lynching.

Although there have been threats which reasonable people would recognize as actual danger, given the context, and therefore not protected by the First Amendment, the University administration still refers to the ongoing declarations of intended harm as protected student expression.

We do not want to contest Hex's principled stand; however, we want to propose that anarchists in this situation might beneficially approach engagement with current institutions in another way, by making a distinction between abolitionism and abstentionism.

Anarchists often default to total disengagement from institutions we want to abolish, usually to avoid legitimizing them by our participation. The present situation at the University of Washington poses a difficult question: Are there times when engaging and using institutions, even those we essentially disagree with, is a more effective way to demonstrate their illegitimacy, while minimizing harm to populations they claim to serve?

Is it possible to call them out on their inconsistency and hypocrisy, to drag them to their limits and force them to reveal deeply-seated contradictions behind their claims of neutrality?

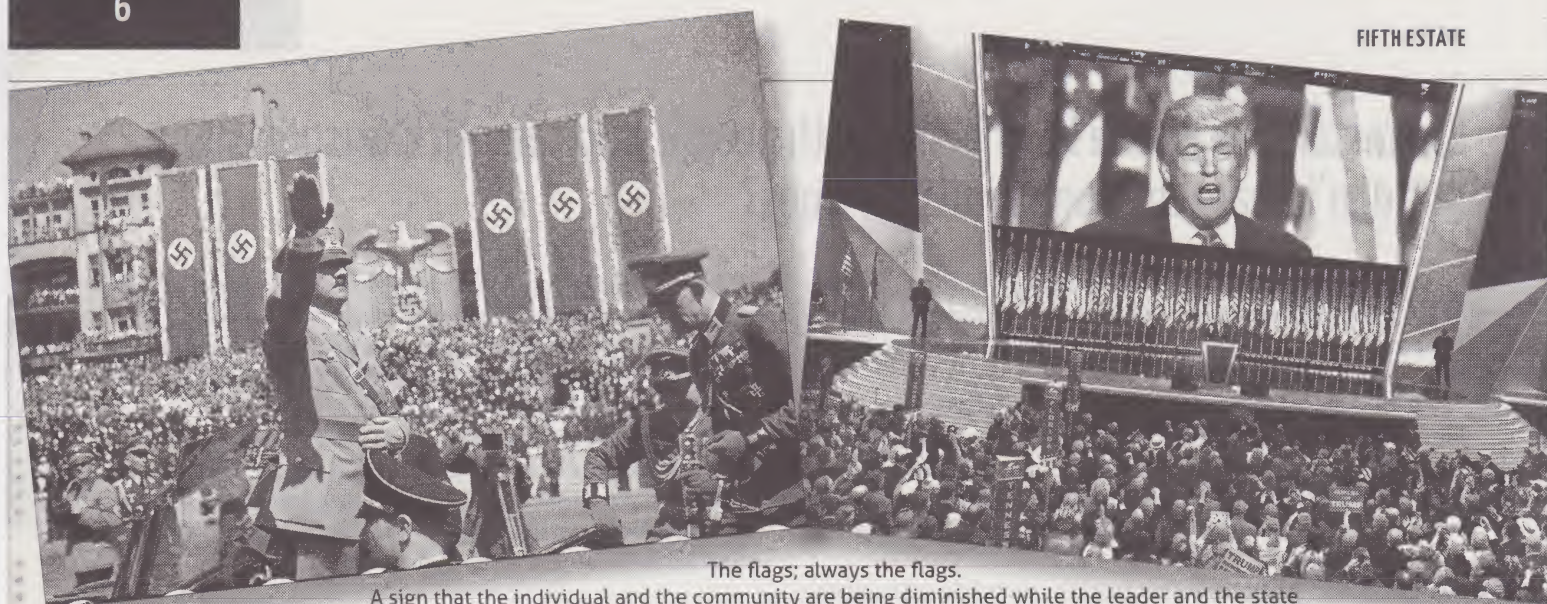
Might it be worth demanding that the University of Washington apply its disciplinary process with fascist students for their threats of rape, violence, and murder, since it has routinely canceled and interfered with talks and events on animal rights, or against the occupation of Palestine, or against borders, prisons and police?

Doing so might not legitimize First Amendment pretenses; it might show up their limits. It may also be necessary, in the current absence of better protections, in order to possibly offer some safety to marginalized students. We may have to engage these institutions to fight for the parts of them we want, against the parts we don't, and to show up the difference by how they act judged against their own supposed standards, and ultimately against our far more radical visions and values.

We also need to ask if restorative justice can be effective with people who commit transgressions but don't share the community's values. Restorative justice is about returning a community to a state of harmony that has been broken by an offense that violates agreed upon values and in cases where the perpetrator as well as the victim realize an injustice was done.

A fascist itching to shoot someone falls outside of that equation. In such a case, there doesn't seem to be much hope for restorative justice as a solution.





The flags; always the flags.  
A sign that the individual and the community are being diminished while the leader and the state are exalted. Pledge allegiance to no flag.

DONALD TRUMP:

# A FASCIST BY ANY OTHER NAME

BILL WEINBERG

In the streets of Washington DC on Inauguration Day, Black Bloc protesters notoriously smashed windows and set a limousine on fire. Fortunately, I wound up on the other side of the police lines when the cops sealed off the area and herded some 200 into pens of metal barricades, where they were kept waiting in the cold for hours before being hauled off to jail.

The surrounding streets were filled with less militant if more colorful protesters. Two young fellows held aloft a big banner with a reproduction of a frame from a 1940s comic book showing Captain America slugging Hitler. The caption read: "Fighting Nazis is an American tradition! Stop the 'alt-right'!"

The radical right is now ensconced at the highest levels of power in the US government, and is emitting an increasingly fascist stench. President Trump officially declared the day of his inauguration a "National Day of Patriotic Devotion." The US military apparently nixed the Trump team's request to have tanks and missile launchers rolling down his parade route, but the president is still looking forward to such spectacles. The military "may come marching down Pennsylvania Avenue," he boasted after the inauguration.

Trump rhetoric seems to be consciously reviving that of the fascist era. The phrase "America First" is all over the White House website—whether or not it has been consciously appropriated from Charles Lindbergh's pro-Nazi movement of the 1940s.

But do the trimmings make for the real McCoy? Is Donald

Trump an actual fascist?

The fact that this question has been subject to media debate is a healthy sign—the idea that a fascist is at the helm of the empire has entered mainstream discourse. But we hear over and over that, no, he is not a fascist. He's a "right-wing populist"—as if these were mutually exclusive categories. Fascism is but the most extreme manifestation of right-wing populism. The question is not whether Trump is one or the other, but how close to the fascist end of the spectrum he has progressed.

Some anarchists and voices on the far left have also balked at the F-word. The anarchist collective CrimethInc asked, "Does Trump Represent Fascism or White Supremacy?" They conclude: "Fascism is Obsolete since 1945; Whiteness is Here to Stay." They even assert that there is "nothing fascist about Trump."

This again misses a critical point. Whiteness has, indeed, been a permanent condition in American politics. Whiteness being harnessed to an aggressively reactionary political program at the highest levels of power is what's new—reactionary in the technical sense of seeking to *reverse and avenge* erosions (real or perceived) of the order of privilege and power.

The left evinces twin errors where the label fascism is concerned. One is using the term so rigorously that it has no utility in describing a social phenomenon. The real hair-splitters even say Hitler was National Socialist not fascist, that only Mussolini was the real fascist.

The differences are real: the Führer's glorification of race versus Il Duce's exaltation of nation. But they were part of the same *reaction* against advances by communists, anarchists, and



## UNLIKE HITLER AND MUSSOLINI, TRUMP BUILT NO PARAMILITARY MOVEMENT before taking power, although right-wing militias may yet operate on behalf of his machine.

others who sought a revolutionary way out of Europe's interwar crisis.

The opposite error is to use the word fascism like a club to beat on anything we don't like. This error was displayed by those who called Hillary Clinton a fascist because she represented a merger of state and corporate power. (As does Trump.) This was a characteristic of fascism, but not the only one. The violent rejection of liberalism and democracy was fundamental.

Even those who do not display either error often reify fascism to the point that they cannot recognize it in updated context and garb.

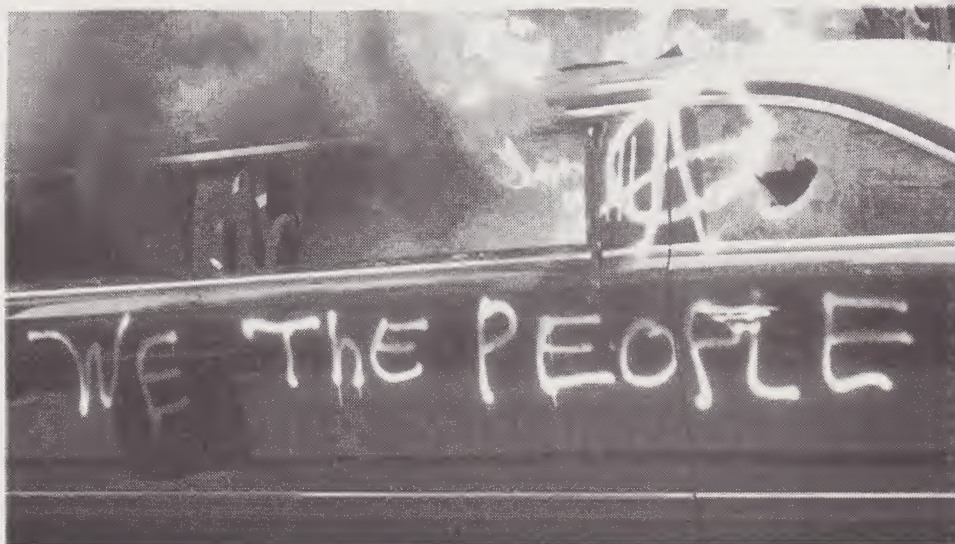
We are told that the US does not face nearly the degree of economic crisis that Weimar Germany did when Hitler came to power. This ignores that fact that Italy faced no such crisis in 1922 when Mussolini triumphed. It also ignores how the aspirations of the downwardly mobile US middle class have been betrayed by free trade, producing, if not desperation, certainly resentment that can be exploited by white nationalism. Trump's voters were fed ethnic scapegoats for their reduced economic prospects—a classically fascist response.

**D**emanding an inflexible analogue to the Weimar Republic in Germany also overlooks the reality that in the contemporary US *whiteness* is under attack. The imminent demographic tilt away from a white majority and the perceived humiliation of relative advances for Blacks also provide a backlash that can be exploited by fascism.

The fascist threat we now face in the US is less ideological than the classic model. Unlike the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini, it shows not a trace of economic populism, apart from rejecting free-trade agreements and offering unlikely promises of returning industrial jobs. Indeed, it glorifies the most vulgar flaunting of wealth, and pledges to undo the last remnants of the New Deal reforms of the 1930s.

But all the essential ingredients are there: ugly ultra-nationalism that seeks to correct perceived humiliation, xenophobia and demonization of the Other, exaltation of the great leader, fetishization of violence, and a populism tinged with anti-Semitism.

There are some obvious divergences from the classic fascist model. Unlike Hitler and Mussolini, Trump built no paramilitary movement before taking power, although right-wing militias may yet operate on behalf of his machine.



**NOTHING DRAWS A CROWD LIKE A BURNING LIMOUSINE.** This one torched by demonstrators during the protests at the Trump inauguration, Jan. 20.

But there is little doubt that Trump is marching there. Here is where his fictional terror attacks could be critical. If there is a "Reichstag Fire," in this case, a terrorist attack (authentic or staged), especially one attributed to a Muslim immigrant, we could find ourselves moving quickly toward something resembling actual fascism.

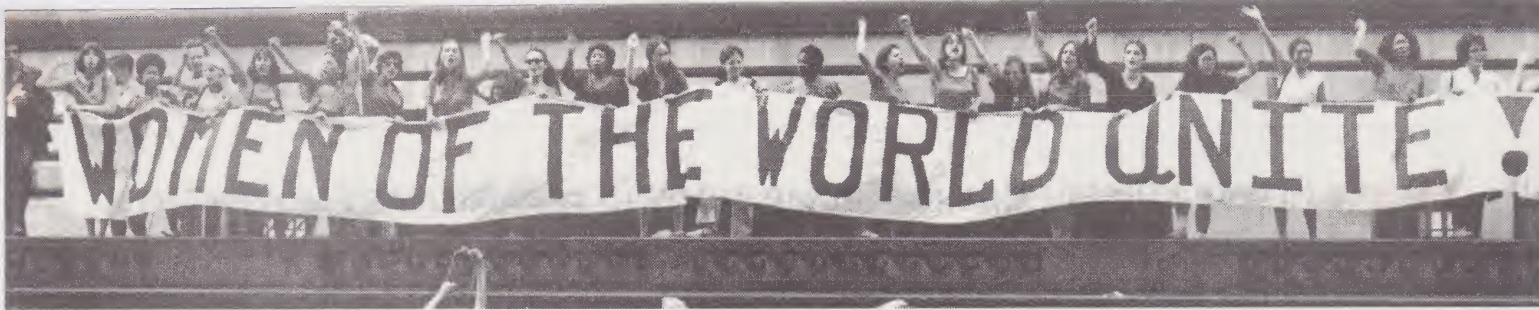
There is obviously a struggle going on within the US intelligence community between those elements with some commitment to bourgeois-democratic norms and those ready to embrace Trump-fascism. If the latter emerge victorious, Trump will be a giant leap closer to realizing his dictatorial dreams.

**A**nd, this may touch on the reluctance of many people to call the new fascism by its name. It gets back to the dichotomy I witnessed in the streets of DC between the Black Bloc and protesters who saw their anti-fascism in patriotic terms. Anarchists especially may balk at recognizing fascism for fear of legitimizing bourgeois democracy—of being on the same side, even if by accident, as Democratic politicians and elements of the intelligence community.

The challenge in the coming period will be to organize effective, tactically astute resistance that does not compromise our independence from the Democratic Party or our critique of capitalism and state power. And, more ambitiously, to do so in a way that will open windows of possibility for a revolutionary way out of North America's current crisis.

Bill Weinberg blogs at [CounterVortex.org](http://CounterVortex.org)





The day before the 2016 election

# The Struggle to Get Back to Zero

PETER WERBE

There have been long standing political and theoretical debates about whether a particular political movement or leader is fascist. In the article before this one, as Bill Weinberg attests in the previous pages, it can come down to hairsplitting.

Is Trump a fascist? Was the Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco? Or, Argentina's Juan Peron? Or, is the term fascist applied indiscriminately to any oppressive government and politician?

Mussolini certainly was and declared himself as such. The Italian dictator made the *fascies*, a bundle of sticks featuring an axe indicating the power over life and death, the original symbol of fascism, hence, the origins of the term. The figure, taken from Imperial Rome, also appears on the U.S. \$1 bill.

Pure fascism was rooted in a philosophy of creating social harmony by ending class conflict under the rule of a strong state and leader. Its aim was to resolve social antagonisms by enforcing the vertical integration of classes whereby, in theory, the state both protected capitalism from revolutionary workers, but also supposedly mitigated exploitation of workers by capital.

In reality, the first tenet was much more forcibly adhered to, with the latter given scant adherence. War, nationalism, and racism figured heavily into the equation.

However, with all of the attempts at defining fascism and who fits into that category, when authoritarian rule becomes dominant in a society, do the formal definitions really matter?

No one labels Stalinist Russia as fascist, but when an "enemy of the people" was sent to a Gulag or shot in the basement of a Cheka prison, compared to a similar scenario involving the Nazi SS, would it really matter to the victim, or to the larger society what the political label was?

What we are seeing now in the American political landscape doesn't rise to the level of historic fascism, but its social base certainly comes close to what has been described as the "crazed hordes of the petty bourgeoisie." The vertical integration of classes under a strong warlike state, with a large portion of a population whipped up in racist frenzy, which worships militarism, and encourages personal self-actualization through identification with the leader and the state, sounds much like the U.S.

Perhaps the good news is that the majority of American voters felt they

were rejecting this in the last election, although, as it has been since 1968, the majority of whites voted for the Republican presidential candidate mostly on the basis of addressing the question: Do black lives matter? They answered, no.

The same would have been true with any Republican candidate, but because of Trump's extraordinary history of racism, xenophobia, and sexism, there is heightened moral indignation at his election and an outpouring of expressions of condemnation. This was seen in the almost immediate organizing of huge demonstrations not seen since the 1960s.

While the outrage at a personally and politically horrid figure being elevated to the position of the world's most powerful man should not be diminished, it's hard to imagine that such a sizable opposition would have occurred had the winning Republican candidate been one of the other terrible politicians from their party.

If the 2016 election hadn't been stolen from Clinton by the suppression of minority voters, Russian hacking, FBI malfeasance, and the Electoral College, there probably would have been only a handful of the usual suspects (that would be us) protesting the election of a Wall Street warmonger (that would be her).

When so many people are mobilized in opposition to the government, anything is possible, but most of it so far has been a struggle to get back to zero; that is, what life and politics was like on Nov. 7, 2016, the day before the election.

Rather than policy, this election particularly was a referendum on what was to constitute the dominant social narrative. In those terms, the Democrats constitute the continuing expansion of the bourgeois revolution which began as narrowly inclusive, contradicting its motto of "liberty and justice for all," or the even better expressed French version—"liberty, equality, fraternity."

The struggles against slavery, including the Civil War, women's suffrage, the labor, civil rights, feminist and LGBTQ movements fit into the fulfillment of these slogans, but al-



## Are the majority of workers, now less organized than ever since capitalism's origin, the agency for revolution?

ways within capitalism, and never completely bringing the visionary triad into complete fulfillment.

The Democrats represent (the importance of the verb needs to be stressed) tolerance and inclusion, while the Republicans are a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of (as is written elsewhere in this issue) 1970s Rhodesians hanging onto a fantasy of white supremacy and a world that barely existed even for them.

The new Republican administration has begun a right wing wish-list repealing of reforms to capitalism that go back as far as the Roosevelt New Deal and 1970s protection of the environment and a women's right to choose. At this writing, they have only begun to unravel social safety nets and restrictions on capital accumulation by the wealthiest.

However, these are not fascist moves, nor is defunding Planned Parenthood or the National Endowment for the Arts or ending financing of programs for Great Lakes or Bay Area water restoration. Even Muslim bans and increased border madness isn't. They are just plain awful and it is understandable why the resistance is as great as it is.

But, where is the resistance going? Occupy, the last great moment of opposition, essentially collapsed because it had nowhere to go after claiming public spaces. The right wing Tea Party found a comfortable home in the Republican Party to the point where their policy goals became dominant and they elected a president..

The developing resistance to the far-right conservative presidency is still in its infancy, but most of it is aimed squarely at replicating Tea Party success by capturing the Democratic Party. Much of the resistance advocates what they define as a progressive agenda, that is, defending the social gains of the last 85 years and adding to them with policies such as a national health care plan.

Even employing a term like resistance with its resonance to the World War II partisan fight against the Nazis suggests something may be different than the usual call for reforms. However, when you go to [michiganforrevolution.com](http://michiganforrevolution.com), one finds a call to join the Democratic Party.

The Republican executive orders and legislation have already hurt a great many people, and more injurious roll-backs of liberal policies that have made capitalism less onerous than it was before the 1930s are planned.

A key component of fascism as well as the American state is its culture of militarism that is the bulwark of war Keynesianism, a huge transfer of wealth from taxes to fuel the U.S. economy through war production. This economic policy brings with it the American empire being perpetually at war, a situation exacerbated by Obama and Clinton's military confrontational policies at Russia's borders, something even the darling of progressives, Bernie Sanders, didn't challenge.

Rick Cronn, "Fragile"—barbed wire & silk

So, what is to be done? Revolution was simple for our radical forebears. Workers produce all wealth; all wealth should go to the workers. Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains. The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. (Oops, that phrase from the preamble to the constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World has disappeared from their publication where it was featured for over a hundred years.)

When those slogans were devised, the proposed solution to capitalism was to get rid of the owners and rulers and have a democratic and equitable society managed by workers councils.

Now, with industrial/petro/chemical capitalism reaching its tipping point of making the planet unlivable, its continuation under a different mode of administration seems fatuous. Plus, are the majority of workers, now less organized than ever since capitalism's origin, the agency for revolution?

Can the same productive apparatus remain after a revolution, but only substituting a Flatulence Filtering Underwear (actual product) Workers Council for the capitalist boss, and in other industries producing thousands of other useless items manufactured to keep capitalism humming?

The question to address is where is the locus of revolutionary organizing? Anywhere? Everywhere? Maybe that's the best we can do right now for self-guidance. What not to do is obvious.

Back into the arms of the Democratic Party as a bulwark against Trump leaves us where we started, at zero.

Regarding right wing policies and actions? Call them fascists or not, we will fight them.

Peter Werbe is a member of the Fifth Estate staff collective.

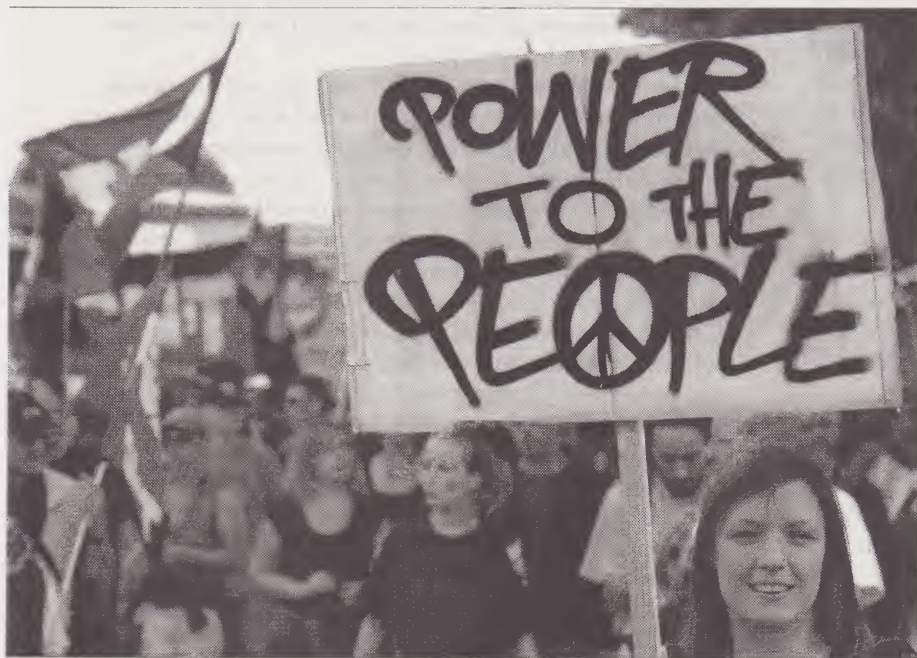




# Social Revolt & the End of Dictatorship

## Pulling Back the Veil of the Vile

JESÚS SEPÚLVEDA



*In Memoriam Luis Ortiz Puppo\**

Populism is the manifestation of political demagoguery that combines financial power and indoctrinated populations. Propaganda is used to indoctrinate the mob.

This social base can amount to a significant percentage of the population—as in Mussolini's Italy or Nazi Germany—or a small but highly-visible group effusively cheering on their defiant and confrontational leader. Such a leader carries out a plan to revise history and accommodate reality to his own ideology.

Authoritarian figures become more powerful as they gain more attention. So, speaking nonsense and falsifying facts, and targeting a broad spectrum of the populace, while denying the truth and covering up crimes also becomes commonplace, bringing tyrants ever-increasing visibility.

In the era of Twitter, electronic tools are used the same way Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, used radio, press, cinema, and theater to manufacture official disinformation. The purpose is always the same: to dictate. Between 1973 and 1990, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet used his executive orders to dictate his plan for law and order, commanding the country according

to his own will while hiding his crimes. He fed the anger of his supporters and encouraged them to act in the same violent way he did.

Authoritarianism reproduces vertically through all segments of society. And the only way to stop it is to resist.

In order to rally and direct the population, the Nazi machinery spread shameless lies, fictionalizing reality, and interpreted events according to its own ideological perspective and interests. If reality didn't fit in with the Nazi agenda, the propaganda experts altered it so the facts could accord with the Führer's perspective. Principle 7 of Goebbels' *19 Propaganda Principles* states: "Credibility alone must determine whether propaganda output should be true or false."

False information to manipulate the population was a *modus operandi* of the Nazi regime in Germany, but also of Franco's Nationalist dictatorship in Spain, Fascism in Italy and Stalinism in the former Soviet Union, among others.

Through systematic deception, ideology emerges and spreads. This helps explain why the racist matrix of German National Socialism captured the minds of many, indoctrinating the population with the supposed superiority of the "Aryan race" and on the supposed inferiority of other "races," such as Jews, Poles, and Roma.

The building process of German racism—as well as that of other colonialist European powers—was based on Christian hostility toward non-Christian cultures.

The long history of racism in Germany facilitated the Nazi escalation that started with the boycott against the so-called "foreign races" to the discriminatory Nuremberg Laws of 1935 until the final solution and systematic mass murder perpetrated in order to install an "ethnic new order."

The idea of race is a matter of hierarchy,



**Revolution is authoritarian** because it imposes itself through power, while revolt is an ongoing and permanent agency of the populace that returns to communities a sense of autonomy and self-determination.

not genealogy or physiognomy. Through hierarchies holders of power de-humanizes other human beings. That is the danger of hierarchical societies and institutions.

The Nazis believed themselves to be superior, but they viewed the outside world as a place where they needed to challenge and compete in order to survive. This is typical of the state of permanent war that works as a fuel for confrontational agendas. Indeed, like supposedly democratic regimes, all dictatorships need enemies to justify their bigotry. It is their strength but also their perdition, because sooner or later a stronger force emerges and resists them until their final decline.

South American dictatorships adopted Nazi-like propaganda methods based on lies promoted through radio, TV and newspapers, methods complemented by torture and disappearances. They ignited flames of nationalism and patriotism to justify their politics of persecution and denunciation, splashing their flags with drops of racism and *machismo* while indoctrinating the population to abusively label designated enemies. Chile's Pinochet called his opponents and enemies "humanoids," completely stripping them of humanity.

The dictators systematically violated human rights and committed crimes against humanity with no remorse. The South African apartheid regime utilized a mechanism of labeling and displacing a huge number of people, consigning them to segregated areas.

In Latin, *volvere*, "to revolt," means a continuous unfolding of events carried out by people who are active agents of their destiny. Revolts reveal historical truth. They also place in people's imagination a collective desire. "We Have the Right to Leisure" was one slogan of the Paris Commune in 1871; "To Hell with Afrikaans" was the triggering motto during the long period of resistance in South Africa after the Soweto uprising of 1976; "He's Going to Fall" was the main chant referring to the Chilean tyrant Pinochet during the nationwide protests between 1983 and 1987. All of these slogans expressed collective desires that signaled popular momentum. And such desires are intrinsically connected to the spirit of the revolt.

Through the installation of collective desires, revolt creates a mindset that detaches people from the old social regime and stimulates their imagination to self-organize in new, transversal fashions. New social subjects spring up in the light of the revolt. But it is also a social mirror where people see each other and reshape human interactions by gathering and being together.

Nineteenth-century French novelist Victor Hugo reflected on the relationship between revolt, insurrection, riot, and truth. In his view, the people, *les misérables*, hold the space that can make political truth visible. Also made visible are the lies of the powerful. The Soweto uprising and related protests were the events that, by their size and unanimity of purpose,

rendered apartheid transparent, so it could be seen clearly for what it was—a hideous racist regimen.

Finding political truth, though, is not enough because revolt is only, to cite Hugo's apt metaphor, a passing storm in the social atmosphere.

Although riots and insurrections are both aspects of it, revolt is not necessarily about taking political power. In other words, revolt is a moment of social agitation that can dismantle power but can also create counter-power, enabling social groups and movements to make their own model of social life.

For these models to be successful, they need to be community-oriented at a local level. Otherwise, the revolt becomes a grand-scale revolution that institutionalizes itself, petrifying the vibrant body of society, stagnating life and repressing people. The Terror in the wake of the French Revolution, the institutionalization of the Mexican Revolution through the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the Gulags during the Stalinist period, and the long-lived dictatorial Chinese regime illustrate the cruel extremes of successful revolutions.

Revolution is authoritarian because it imposes itself through power, while revolt is an ongoing and permanent agency of the populace that returns to communities a sense of autonomy and self-determination. Revolutions tend to steal power and truth from the people and put them in the hands of political people—the *caudillos* as they are known in Spanish. This is why revolutions are susceptible to becoming tyrannies. Revolt is, in contrast, a spontaneous manifestation of people who actively rise up to recover the truth and dismantle demagogy.

Revolt is also a return to egalitarian social dynamics, in which hierarchies no longer seem permanently unchallengeable. After the Soweto uprising, people became more confident in resisting the institutionalized racist system. Likewise, the protests in Chile during the 1980s unveiled the dictatorship's real face and triggered the social re-articulation of society, expressed in the form of active communities. In both cases external institutionalized hierarchies, as well as internal social hierarchies, became more visible and, therefore, more easily resisted.

*\* Luis Ortiz Puppo (1932–2016) was a history teacher, a radical socialist, gay, and bohemian freethinker. He helped an entire generation of individuals, who spent time at a house in Marconi Street in Santiago, Chile during and after the military dictatorship (1970s to 1990s), to believe in the power of words.*

Jesús Sepúlveda teaches at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He is the author of eight collections of poetry and three books of essays, including his green-anarchist manifesto, *The Garden of Peculiarities*, and his book on Latin America poetry, *Poets on the Edge*.



# EAT YOUR PRESIDENT FOR BREAKFAST

## THE MORMYRIDS

**T**he long and tiresome electoral campaign of President Posterior revealed to home audiences (we can hardly call the unmobilized American masses anything else) the dyspeptic underbelly of the liberal-democratic fantasy.

Locked within the confines of their curated Internet timelines and baseless feel-good truisms about voting, clueless pseudorationalists speak about waking up to a new epoch. We cannot call it an awakening. Perhaps it is more like a fit of hypnopompic sleep paralysis and its accompanying suite of horrible hallucinations.

Despite a long line of successful and untouchable buffoons in the international political arena serving as test dummies (Italy's Silvio Berlusconi, Toronto's Rob Ford, Vladimir "KGB" Putin) the vast majority of people have been taken utterly by surprise.

The New World Order? A goofy blend of reality television pacing with saber rattling, misogyny, racism, and media distraction. A new self-deprecating authoritarianism along the lines of Ubu, Gilliam's Brazil and the regime of Rufus T. Firefly. A coalition of protectionist nuclear thugs and improvised bigots with shiny buttons. A wall-building bastion for the noxious identity of "whiteness."

In the West, the Diffused Spectacle spoken of by Debord seems to be concretizing itself anew to make-up for the fall of the Soviet Union. The elites re-integrate genuine tensions by enacting a puppet show version in electoral politics to get us to play along.

Under the superstructure, our economics aren't going anywhere. Financialization and managerial extremism are still the order of the day. Capitalism is pleased to do away with its democratic veneer, an outmoded tool of an early bourgeoisie, long since discarded in China, Russia, Singapore. Thuggery, private jails and weapons programs are good business. The markets have never rallied so strongly following an election of a U.S. President.

Are we angry enough yet? Is this the particular scandal we're mad at, or the general system of

exploitation? With Trump at the helm in America, it's obvious where to throw our bricks. We enjoy the sight of America's decay even as we fear the new authoritarian future that awaits us in its wake if we let it. A crisis of representation is at least a great opportunity to break things while the streets are hot.

But merdre! Just so there's no beans about it. We denounce Presidents. Presidents general and particular. Presidents are steaming bags of greencandle-assed misogynist fruitfly fuckers; no, presidents are scarecrows stuffed with rotting smegma flesh and curdled earvomit written in blood drenched legalese; no, wait, all presidents past present and future are goofy shitstained bloodpuppets for the cash-nexus of capitalism and its diarrhoea smeared bearers, the capitalist class; no, this president is a gesticulating earwig on top of the previously enumerated effluvia; this president is a firecracker rapist and an acid aquarium of fentanyl eyeballs and sniffing nostrils; no, this is a racist and rapist and an exploiter and a heap of garbage doubling as a paranoiac image of an ice cream cone flavored with halitosis under a green moon signifying a vulture beak in the royal phynancial rectum.

All presidents are added to the rostrum of guillotinable offenders along with gods and kings.

The first President was a slave owner. The last President, a murderous drone technician. This President. The next President and the next, next President. Presidents are pestilential.

We want Presidents to go extinct. Not coral reefs and honey bees.

We stand with the majority who don't vote. We stand in solidarity with those who are protesting Trump and the current world in all its rottenness, with Black Lives Matter, with no-DAPL.

As surrealists we are joining them in the streets, keeping an eye out for utopia and a new myth wherever they may appear in the midst of the fighting. Bring a fleshbloody cheese grater. Bring your cats and dogs and birds. Old Père Ubu's got you covered.

Go out into the streets and fight your president.

**EAT HIM ALIVE.**







# The Refusal to Be Ruled

**Revolutions, Revolts, Riots, and Rebellions** have been a constant in human affairs since the emergence of the state 8,000 years ago. They are popular responses to life being administered by a political apparatus which governs on behalf of a class of rulers. They are sometimes planned; other times, spontaneous.

Without the repressive mechanism of the state—the cops and army—to stop insurgencies, the power, privilege, and wealth of those in the elite caste would quickly be dispersed. The state ultimately rests upon and depends upon this stratum of force to assure social relations of rulers and ruled are maintained intact.

The prevalence of social disturbances throughout history, including the ultimate disruption, revolution, suggests how close to the surface is dissatisfaction with class society. The mechanisms of power maintenance are enforced in all state societies through structures of mass psychology of passivity and obedience and religious and social mythology. When these methods fail, state violence is employed to dispatch the dissidents.

Even though most refusals to be ruled have been quashed over the millennia, no matter how much people in a given era appear to be domesticated to power displaying a willingness to submit, there is something seemingly inherent in the human psyche that revolts against submission.

Not all uprisings have had admirable intent and very few have been successful, but we celebrate the spirit of revolution in the individual and society, and encourage its outbreak until all are free.

Given the extensive occurrence of Revolutions, Revolts, Riots, and Rebellions, what we present in this section cannot even claim to scratch the surface of their legacy. The articles in this section are but a few examples from our epoch of events that shook the foundations of class rule, if in some instances, for only a few days.

But, what was possible in a factory a hundred years ago, in the streets of a major U.S. city 50 years past, or what has occurred in recent years, suggests that for all the efforts of the rulers, some still say, "We will not be governed!"

—photo: Dennis Fox [dennisfoxphoto.com](http://dennisfoxphoto.com)



# The Russian Revolution Unfinished

SK

"Whether one chooses to examine the opening phases of the French Revolution of 1789, the revolutions of 1848, the Paris Commune, the 1905 revolution in Russia, the overthrow of the Tsar in 1917, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the French general strike of 1968, the opening stages are generally the same: a period of ferment that explodes spontaneously into a mass upsurge."

— Murray Bookchin, "Myth of the Party: Bolshevik Mystification and Counter-Revolution," *Fifth Estate* #272, May 1976 and in our anti-Marx issue, #393, Spring 2015.

2017 marks the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. This world-shaking upheaval occurred at the end of World War I, a time of self-emancipating uprisings in several countries that challenged the rule of capitalism and the state.

Peasants and workers in Russia first went into the streets to demand bread and an end to involvement in the War, but the demonstrations and strikes quickly transformed from riot to rebellion and from there to a full scale revolution that very many hoped would lead to freedom and equality, challenging centuries of hierarchies of domination and economic exploitation.

Although anarchists were in the minority in Russia, they nevertheless played a very influential and respected role alongside non-Bolshevik socialists in the discussions and actions that were taking place.

In the present century, we are once again witnessing widespread riots, rebellions, and near revolutions in many countries, most notably in the East Mediterranean region, and to some extent in Eastern Europe. Once again anarchists are actively involved.

Today's Russia suffers from extremes of social and

economic inequality, accompanied by brutal repression of individual and group freedoms of expression and association.

One contemporary Russian anarchist group, Autonomous Action, describes the country as a strongly hierarchical and authoritarian society "tightly interlaced with a repressive state apparatus, industrial capitalist economic structure and authoritarian and hierarchic relations between people."

As in the 20th century, anarchists in Russia have been participating, through words and direct actions, in the struggles and have been suffering the consequences.

In June 2016, the Anarchist Black Cross of Moscow issued an international call for support for activists, especially anarchist, antifa comrades and those fighting for human rights and social justice. Some were imprisoned on the basis of confessions obtained under torture. Many are now in high security prisons or isolated in forced labor camps.

What is currently going on in Russia and around the world can't really be understood or adequately challenged without being aware of what happened during the past century. Part of

the struggle also crucially involves the unearthing of the suppressed libertarian history of revolution, challenging the myths and lies that have been used to obscure the authentic popular insurgencies, and honoring those rebels who were active in them.

The present-day Russian government is clearly threatened by the memories of self-emancipation that the centenary might awaken in the Russian population.

It therefore intends to work at blocking such memories out with messages that emphasize the negative consequences of resorting to revolution to solve social and political problems.

The 1917 Russian Revolution needs to be remembered, honored and questioned in this context.

To begin with, it is important to remember that there was a lot more to this



The Russian people made a revolution.  
Lenin, Trotsky, & Stalin destroyed it.





The new Soviet state began the suppression of anarchist & non-Bolshevik publications, deployed the Cheka (political police) to imprison & kill critics, & repressed strikes and protests.

revolution than the October Bolshevik Party takeover of the state apparatus. The process began in February 1917, when thousands went into the streets for massive protests and strikes. The Tsarist regime, the government at the time, ordered troops to fire on the crowds in an attempt to frighten them into submission. But soon many soldiers and sailors refused to follow orders, and several regiments joined the demonstrators en masse.

Military discipline was also disintegrating among troops still on the battlefield, and Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate the throne. A bourgeois democratic Provisional Government took control of what was left of the state apparatus in March, but it was not able to satisfy the increasingly revolutionary demands of the insurgent population.

At the same time, outside officially recognized government control, workers and peasants were taking factories and the land into their own hands, and beginning what they hoped would be the basic groundwork for egalitarian self-governance.

Throughout 1917, workers formed factory committees in enterprises in several parts of the country. At first these committees primarily made demands on employers for better pay and working conditions. But gradually they took control of workplaces that were then run directly by the people who worked there utilizing newly-learned defiance of authority.

In the countryside, peasants were seizing land and also often creating self-governance bodies to help coordinate farming and sharing economies locally.

Soldiers who didn't desert outright began rejecting authoritarian military discipline and electing officers rather than accepting appointments from above.

Soviets (soldiers' peasants', and workers' councils) were created throughout Russia to coordinate the local self-governance that was emerging in various aspects of life.

Initially, anarchists and anti-authoritarian socialists in other parts of the world were enthusiastic about what was happening in Russia. They were excited to know that people

were beginning to take control of the conditions that directly affected them. Ever since 1903, they had expressed strong concerns about the authoritarian and elitist character of the Bolshevik party. But, the wave of enthusiasm about the revolutionary possibilities caused very many anarchists to temporarily set aside these apprehensions, even after the Bolshevik takeover of the government in October.

Then, gradually, information about the repression of anarchists and non-Bolshevik socialists, and of the population in general started to leak out. Respected Russian anarchists began to report brutal and murderous crackdowns on all non-Bolshevik groups, individuals, and ideas. First private correspondence, then articles and books by authors such as Alexander Berkman, Emma Goldman, Piotr Arshinov, Ida Mett, Voline (born Vsevolod Mikhailovich Eichenbaum) and others began to make it clear that things were going terribly wrong in several ways.

In October 1917, the Bolsheviks, led by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, seized power from the Provisional Government and consolidated their control of the governmental machinery and economy. They quickly erected a brutal state capitalist dictatorship, all the while calling it communist.

Within a short time the new Soviet state commenced the suppression of anarchist and other non-Bolshevik publications, formed and deployed the Cheka (political police) to imprison and kill critics, repressed strikes and protests, undermined the factory committees, gerrymandered and disbanded soviets when they couldn't control them—all in the name of protecting the revolution. The justifications for these moves against the new self-governance practices were not then and are not now convincing, except to the ideologically committed.

In 1921, the Bolshevik government ruthlessly put down strikes in Petrograd which were demanding greater equality of income between ordinary working people and Communist Party bureaucrats and managers, as well as more direct democracy. The newly trained and disciplined military was



also used to crush a revolt in Kronstadt, where soldiers, sailors and other city residents were daring to question Bolshevik rule and elite status. The Kronstadt rebels declared that they wanted the state to be replaced by a genuine form of working class democracy based on the councils.

As anticipated by anarchists and other critics, the Bolsheviks in power hijacked popular revolutionary activity; the people in their multitude became a single entity, the masses, whose power disappeared to be replaced by a struggle between individual party members for control of the state. By the end of the 1920s, the already authoritarian repressive regime metastasized to something even more grotesque, the reign of Stalin.

**T**hus, the Russian communist system enforced authoritarian centralized power and the indefinite postponement of freedom for individuals and groups who did not agree with the government's goals and methods.

The Russian state and Bolshevik party apparatus consolidated power as the central unit of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR/Soviet Union) and persisted in that role from 1922 until 1991.

The vast majority of Russian people and others in the Eastern Bloc were relieved by the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s, but as memories of its reality fade and living standards for the population are eroded by the new neo-liberal regime, some have become nostalgic for the good old days, mythologizing life under the Soviet dictatorship.

From the point of view of anarchists—striving for the elimination of hierarchy, domination and exploitation of all sorts—this nostalgia and mythologization need to be challenged. The 1917 Russian Revolution deserves to be remembered and respected because the peasants, workers and soldiers succeeded in ousting the old ruling class and opening

up possibilities for real societal transformation. However, the hope of overcoming capital and the state was dashed by a monstrous regime that successfully blocked the realization of anti-authoritarian revolution for 80 years or more.

While remembering and valuing the courage, dreams and ideas of those who participated in that revolution, it is also necessary to critically review the difficulties that were not overcome and the questions not resolved during or after 1917.

Some of those questions might include:

How and why were huge numbers of people disempowered while in the process of developing their capacities to take control of their own lives?

How and why was the struggle changed from one in which people were organizing their own lives in their work places and neighborhoods into battles against and between party and government functionaries?

How and why was a new ruling class able to come to power?

Would similar processes have relevance for the situation today in one or more parts of the world?

**A**s indicated above, anarchists and others fighting for a society based on mutual aid, solidarity, and freedom in present-day Russia are faced with a highly repressive state apparatus. Sadly, in a situation similar to the Cold War era, they are also met with the indifference (or worse) of foreign leftists, who find it difficult to criticize the Russian state because of its role as a strong opponent of their main enemy, the US.

Clearly, insights into what went wrong and the historical mystifications of the 1917 Russian Revolution are essential, but not enough.

As outsiders with respect to the political left and the ruling center and right, anarchists can and must go beyond this into new territories of understanding and action.

SK is a grandchild of the Ukrainian and Siberian popular resistance against Bolshevik authoritarian rule.

—P. 14 & 15 illustrations from Robert Graham's Anarchism Weblog [robertgraham.wordpress.com](http://robertgraham.wordpress.com) featuring a huge trove of anarchist history and ideas.



Solidarity with striking prisoners workers at Holman Prison, Atmore, Ala., Sept. 2016

See our web site for submission guidelines: [FifthEstate.org](http://FifthEstate.org)

## Call for Submissions for our Next Issue

### Globalize Solidarity—Mutual Aid against planetary domination.

We want your suggestions for finding anarchist, counter-authoritarian ways out of our social, political and environmental predicaments

Solidarity and Mutual Aid are not objects in a Kropotkin museum. They are all around us in our daily relations with comrades and our concerns for individuals and populations we support. Knowing more about the achievements of solidarity and Mutual Aid in these dark times can make us stronger and better prepared for struggles ahead.

Send us your essays, fiction, poetry, and graphics. We want to publish thoughtful, hopefully inspiring, words and images to remind the world that We Are Still Here—We are Dangerous Because We Have Each Other!

Send proposals to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org).

Submission deadline: July 1





# 1967 Detroit Explodes

The 1967 Detroit Rebellion began unexpectedly. Still, it should have been anticipated. At 3:45 a.m. on a still scorching hot early morning on July 23, 1967, cops raided an all black, after-hours drinking spot, locally called a blind pig, and began roughly herding patrons into police wagons.

This was no different an occurrence than had happened numerous times previously. The Detroit police were roundly hated by black people as a white occupation force staffed by corrupt and brutal racists who routinely made life even more miserable for a mostly impoverished community. Normally, arrests and police harassment went unanswered.

This time it was different. The Rebellion erupted in Detroit, as it did in so many other cities, because of systemic discrimination in all sectors of life for black people and unrelenting police brutality.

Bill Scott, son of the owner of the illegal drinking establishment, saw not only his father's patrons being pushed into police vehicles, but witnessed the usual disrespect and unnecessary force being used. Scott made history with a beer bottle he threw at a police sergeant. It missed, but it had enough social force behind it to ignite one of the most destructive and deadly urban uprisings of that decade.

When it was over, almost four days later, the toll was 43 dead, 1,189 injured, over 7,200 arrested, and more than 2,000

buildings destroyed, nearly all in the area then called the ghetto. The city has never completely recovered from the events.

White racist cops and Michigan National Guardsmen, the latter untrained and unfamiliar with the city, were responsible for almost all of the deaths, many of which can be categorized as summary executions. Reports of snipers and black armed resistance flew about, including in this publication at the time, but remain as only rumors, and wishful thinking in some quarters.

Denied the wages necessary to purchase the glittering commodities beckoning for consumption, it is estimated that 10,000 people turned inner-city businesses into what was called in the 1960s, a giant Free Store. Another 100,000 are said to have watched the action, and considered it all great sport.

Detroit's mayor at the time expressed horror as he witnessed first hand what he called "a carnival-like atmosphere," as multiracial groups of looters made off with everything that wasn't nailed down and often set fire to hated businesses.

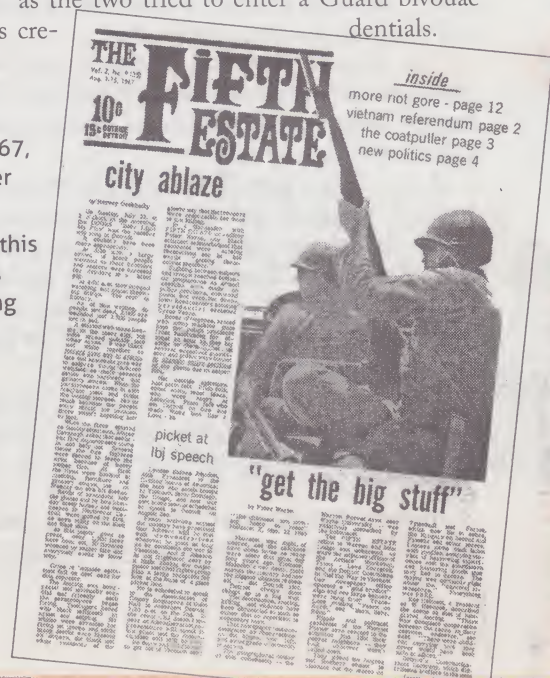
The Guard brought in tanks and half-tracks with mounted machine guns in an attempt to bring back capital's order, wildly discharging tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition to the point where military units blocks away thought they were under assault from armed bands.

With the city still ablaze and the Guard running out of bullets, President Lyndon Johnson sent in the racially integrated U.S. 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions; many of these troops had seen combat in Vietnam and now found themselves in a similar war at home.

The *Fifth Estate*, in 1967 not even two years old, was in the midst of things. The then biweekly tabloid's office near Detroit's Wayne State University, was intentionally tear gassed by the National Guard, and the paper's editors were threatened at gunpoint by a soldier growling, "I know who you are; get out of here," as the two tried to enter a Guard bivouac point with press credentials.

August 1-15, 1967,  
Fifth Estate cover

The contents of this issue and others directly following the July 1967 Rebellion are available at [FifthEstate.org/archives](http://FifthEstate.org/archives). Click on issue #31 to begin.







## How White Supremacy Progresses Fifty Years of Lessons from Detroit 1967

FRANK JOYCE

"I calmed the tremor in my gut. I was in close quarters with some representative specimens of the most dangerous creatures in the history of the world, the white man in a suit." —Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Sympathizer*

**T**he normal pattern in our culture is to manufacture amnesia about past unpleasanties such as slavery, Native American genocide, Viet Nam, and other assaults against people of color.

It is surprising, therefore, that those in power have invested considerable resources in high profile attention to the 1967 eruption in Detroit that brought federal troops to the streets of the city.

The Detroit Historical Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts and other local institutions have been funded to do various reflections. Detroit media is involved, as well.

And, it's not just local. The Hollywood team of Kathryn Biegelow and Mark Boal, award winners for hyper-violent pro-war movies like "The Hurt Locker" and "Zero Dark Thirty" has finished shooting "The Untitled Detroit Project." The storyline is "A police raid in Detroit in 1967 results in one of the largest citizen uprisings in the United States' history."

Why is the establishment making a big deal out of the anniversary? Most likely, because it thinks it's important to settle some issues in their favor—including what to call it.

Many whites vigorously resist the term Rebellion in favor of riot. No surprise here. As I argued in a 2016 *Detroit Free Press* op-ed piece:

**Fifth Estate articles from during & after the Detroit Rebellion are at [fifthestate.org/archive](http://fifthestate.org/archive).**

**Frank Joyce, was the Fifth Estate News Editor 50 years ago, & rejoins us with reflections on the 1967 events.**

*The history of criminalizing most behavior by blacks goes back to the origins of white supremacy itself. Moral supremacy by fiat, force and power is one of white supremacy's core components. And as we know from whites destroying property by throwing tea into the Boston Harbor, Rebellion is in the eye of the beholder.*

*Especially in a nation whose founding mythology honors insurrection, the word Rebellion has serious legitimacy. Riot on the other hand conveys criminality. Hence, most media and many whites prefer riot. Perhaps more importantly, using the term riot perpetuates white denial that blacks would have anything to rebel about.*

**O**f course words matter. But there is also a lot to the cliché that actions speak even louder. Specifically, the actions that White Power took following the 1967 uprising powerfully suggest they thought it was a Rebellion. For hundreds of years, White Power's reaction to real and perceived threats has been punishment and control. Post Rebellion Detroit is no exception.

The fires of July 1967 still smoldered when the City Council agreed to finance a massive purchase of machine guns, armored personnel carriers, ammunition and other military supplies for an enlarged Detroit Police Department.

Then mayor, Jerome P. Cavanagh, also advocated that the federal government subsidize a "back-to-the-land" movement to the South as a means of reducing the Negro population in Northern cities like Detroit. The cost, he argued, would be much less per family than transferring the same family to the welfare rolls.

Cavanagh and the other proponents of ethnically cleansing cities of blacks who migrated north to es-



cape Jim Crow in the early to mid 20th Century sensed that capitalism had a problem. The growing mobility of capital, combined with technological displacement, was and still is making vast numbers of the urban industrial workforce superfluous.

The urban ethnic cleansing scheme fizzled. Instead, other strategies were deployed.

No one better expressed the prevailing white attitude guiding the plans than long-serving white supremacist, suburban Oakland County executive, L. Brooks Patterson. As recently as 2014, in a *New Yorker* magazine profile, he reaffirmed an earlier statement, "What we're going to do is turn Detroit into an Indian reservation, where we herd all the Indians into the city, build a fence around it, and then throw in the blankets and corn."

Patterson's degree of honesty is unusual. In fact, if you think of White Power as a corporation, one of its biggest divisions would be the department of denial, confusion, and obfuscation. When it comes to Detroit, that branch has done effective work. Rather than acknowledge the overt and covert racist motivations of government and corporate policies toward the city, it promulgated alternative explanations.

First and foremost, as race-based capitalism has always done, it blames the victims. There are any number of variations on this trope. The most common is that Detroit degenerated because the Rebellion caused whites to flee the city.

This turns cause and effect upside down. Did white flight and other forms of disinvestment intensify after 1967? Yes. But it started far earlier. Racialized relocation of jobs from Detroit was well underway by the 1940s. Repressive treatment of blacks by the all-white police force was a constant. So was every other form of racial discrimination. By 1967, African Americans had plenty to rebel against. And they did.

Another rationalization links Detroit's current problems to those of the Detroit automakers and/or the financial crisis of 2007-2009. To be sure, globalization of the auto industry severely disrupted Michigan based GM, Ford, and Chrysler. And, yes, the hydra-headed economic crisis of 2007-2009 unleashed other troubles as well.

The problem is that macro forces of this magnitude should have been evenly distributed across Detroit. But they weren't. Predominantly black Detroit suffered adversely in ways that the white suburbs did not. Which is exactly the outcome that race-based capitalism is designed to achieve.

How did they do it? Recognizing the synergistic effect of these policies, following is a partial list of what White Power did:

- Disinvestment by white capital and white people accelerated. Dramatically reinforcing the segregationist message for all to see was the relocation of the Detroit Lions football team and the Detroit Pistons basketball team to distant suburbs.

- The Detroit Public School system was essentially destroyed by a series of State government overseers. This had the collateral effect of damaging neighborhoods, property

values and thus tax revenues.

- The mass incarceration of black Detroiters in out-state prisons permanently devastated thousands of lives and families. It also reduced the voting power of Detroit citizens while increasing that of white rural areas.

- The state legislature and suburban voters rejected regional mass transit more than 25 times, thus deterring low income Detroiters from getting to where jobs had moved.

- Massive water shutoffs and denial of other basic services further burdened Detroit neighborhoods.

- Onerous costs were foisted on Detroit taxpayers to subsidize private investment in downtown entertainment venues patronized primarily by white suburbanites.

- Severe insurance and financial redlining was imposed on Detroit residents.

- Mass foreclosures and abandonments now give the city the ruin porn look so beloved by white filmmakers and photographers.

- State laws were passed that restricted the ability of the city government to collect taxes from Detroit employers.

- Detroit's African Americans, including Detroit's first black mayor, Coleman A. Young, were relentlessly demonized by Detroit area media, led by the *Detroit News*. To this day, the self-appointed spokesperson for the superiority of white people, the *News* reassures whites with incessant messages of black criminality, corruption, and incompetence.

- City government was steadily disempowered by the formal and informal transfer of control to regional authorities, public/private partnerships, non-governmental organizations, private business and the foundation-industrial complex. >>>>



The almost all white Michigan National Guard charges down Detroit's 12th Street where the 1967 Rebellion began.

"The people ruled the city for a minute, and may still be ruling when this is printed. The hypocrisy of "democratic capitalism" stood exposed, naked and ugly. The troops protected the owners' possessions and shot the people down in the streets for money." —The Coat Puller, column by John Sinclair, *Fifth Estate*, August 1-15, 1967



• Finally, the complete disenfranchisement of Detroit voters was achieved via “emergency management” control by the State government, which was then used to engineer Detroit’s widely publicized federal bankruptcy.

### Visionary Organizing

What continues to amaze about Detroit exemplifies what is remarkable about the entire history of enslaved blacks in America. To accept even a vulgar version of “survival of the fittest” is to marvel at the ability of Detroiters to function under the difficult circumstances enforced over the last fifty years. This is not to minimize the suffering or the pain inflicted. Rather, it is to acknowledge the innovation and resourcefulness with which Detroiters are making a new way out of no way.

Nothing is off limits. As increasing sections of already marginalized populations are being moved into a post-capitalist

world—no wage work; no commodity consumption—people in Detroit are involved in autonomous projects that are a hotbed of new thinking and action in the theory and practice of what comes next.

These include everything from innovative urban agriculture to new approaches to education, community conflict resolution such as Peace Zones For Life, experiments in new technology driven, community based manufacturing, inventive media, art, and spirituality.

Revolutions always begin with creating a new world in the shell of the old. Detroit is on its way.

Frank Joyce is a lifelong Detroit-based writer and activist. He is co-editor with Karin Aguilar-San Juan of *The People Make The Peace: Lessons From The Vietnam Antiwar Movement*.

His *Fifth Estate* articles at the time of the Detroit Rebellion are at [FifthEstate.org/archive](http://FifthEstate.org/archive).

## Excerpts from a Rebellion How the Fifth Estate Reported It

The following are excerpts from stories published in the *Fifth Estate* immediately following the July 1967 events.

Reading them a half century later, one is saddened and angered by the fact that the causes of the Rebellion—police brutality, racial discrimination, and wealth inequality—remain virulent and unresolved.

The complete articles and others are at [FifthEstate.org/archive](http://FifthEstate.org/archive).

**The Coat Puller**, a column by John Sinclair, FE #35, August 1-15, 1967

“Light My Fire” [by The Doors] rises through the radio ranks for weeks and, when it hits number one on the stations, the people respond and burn the city down.

Soldiers in battle green and Tommy-guns hold down the banks and furniture stores where there’s still furniture, gun shops, troops massed at the Woodward Hudson’s entrances to keep the plastic castle safe from lawless, pillaging, looting criminals, as the governor and the President of the United States call them on TV, and still the fires burn, the stores fall, the people set the night on fire.

No, baby, it’s not a “race riot,” or anything as simple as that. People just got tired of being hassled by police and

cheated by businessmen and got out their equalizers and went to town. The mode of the music changed and the walls of the city shook and fell. Yes they did. Oh, it was Robin Hood Day in merry olde Detroit, the first annual city-wide all-free fire sale, and the people without got their hands on the goodies.

The people ruled the city for a minute, and may still be ruling when this is printed. The hypocrisy of “democratic capitalism” stood exposed, naked and ugly. The troops protected the owners’ possessions and shot the people down in the streets for money. Sing it, shout it, scream it down—the news is out, people, you own the town.

### “Get the big stuff”

by Peter Werbe  
FE #35, August 1-15, 1967

Hippie and political residents of the Warren Forest area reacted to the situation just like their poorer neighbors—they took whatever wasn’t nailed down.

They joined the Negroes and Southern whites in cleaning out the stores on Trumbull and Forest, which now lie in ashes. Looters came back laden with goodies, swapping stories of harrowing experiences with the guardsmen and

bartering goods that they had in excess. The mayor was certainly right about the “carnival atmosphere.” Everything was FREE.

### Residents Describe Jail Experiences

by Anonymous  
FE #35, August 1-15, 1967

We were almost home [on Sunday] when five cop cars pulled up with guns sticking out of all the windows and stopped us.

The cops that came over to our car stuck shotguns in our faces and made us get out. They handcuffed our hands behind our backs. They lined us up against the brick wall of a house and started questioning us, searching us and banging our heads against the wall.

At the station, as they shoved us into the cell, one cop stood and hit us in the face with his fist. Every once in a while they would bring in more prisoners. Almost all of them were brought in for curfew violations and almost all of them had been beaten.

Tuesday night they brought fifteen sandwiches on a tray to the cell block. There were now over one hundred people in the block. Those near the door grabbed the food and the cops told us they would be back in a while with more. People waited for hours until some of them started fainting. The cops refused to do anything about them [until] people started screaming.



# How Solidarity & Mutual Aid Saved Barcelona's Can Vies Squat from Eviction & Destruction

SCORSBY AND CELÍACO

**T**he Can Vies social centre in Barcelona made headlines around the world when its eviction led to five consecutive nights of rioting in late May 2014. But the social center has a longer history than this.

Can Vies, originally built in 1879 to stock construction materials for the city's subway, became the headquarters of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT transport union during the 1930s Spanish Revolution. Following Franco's victory in 1939, the building became the center for a fascist, hierarchal labor union.

In 1997, the building was abandoned by its owners, Barcelona's transport authority (TMB), and was subsequently squatted by the neighborhood's youth. Since then, the Centro Social Autogestionado Can Vies has become a well-used and well-loved community space providing a variety of services to the people of Sants, a neighborhood with a strong tradition of cooperatives.

The centre has hosted neighbourhood assemblies, political meetings, workshops, films and concerts. A local newspaper, *La Burxa*, has been produced there since 1998.

**I**nter-squat solidarity started long before the announcement of Can Vies' eviction by the Barcelona city officials. In May 2013, Can Piella, a Squatted Social Centre (SSC) in Montcada i Reixac near Barcelona, which connected urban and rural squatting, was evicted.

With the help of their farmer neighbors' agricultural machinery, barricades were set up around the house to slow police from reaching their self-managed farm. That year, police also sealed off the SSC, impeding people from entering and effectively preventing the squat's political activity.

In February 2014, it was the turn of La Carboneria, near Seville, to get evicted—another SSC with a strong political agenda. Other squat evictions followed.

Squats supported each other in resisting eviction, which consolidated ties of mutual aid against repression. The strengthening of solidarity finally reached a high



Protests and rioting broke out across Spain in 2014 when the Barcelona mayor tried to evict Can Vies, a long-running squat.

**The  
existence of  
a self-  
organized  
space  
appeared to  
be a threat  
to the city  
administra-  
tion**

point with the active opposition to the eviction of Can Vies and the beginning of the building's demolition.

The existence of a self-organized space appeared to be a threat to the city administration, and Barcelona mayor, Xavier Trias, ordered the eviction. Despite huge opposition (the squat had the support of more than 200 community associations), the eviction went ahead. This immediately triggered protests in Barcelona and in other cities beyond Catalonia.

**I**n Valencia, 500 gathered, in Girona, 250, in Lleida, 200, Sabadell, Hospitalet and Vic, 150 in Tarragona and Manresa, 100 in Terrassa and Igualada, and further demonstrations were held in Madrid and throughout Spain.

During the first days of protest, 4,000 demonstrators came to Sants, and on Saturday over 10,000 people marched through the city. On the third day of protests there were demonstrations in no less than 46 districts in Barcelona.

The third day was crucial, as there had not been riots lasting longer than two days in the city centre since the downfall of the dictator Franco in the 1970s.

The following by Joni D., a veteran of libertarian movements, is from the crowdfunded booklet which was swiftly compiled and distributed for the occasion:

"There was a quiet atmosphere until nightfall, while people throughout the city were discussing what had happened. During the afternoon, people gathered in



## People Power meets Mutual Aid. After days of protests and riots, people came to the partially demolished Can Vies squat to salvage bricks for its rebuilding. And, it was so.

their own neighborhoods. In Nou Barris, a potentially rebellious proletarian zone, a strong police presence was felt and prevented people from congregating in a single area. In Sant Andreu, the crowd blocked one of the main streets with burning containers.

Most of the protesters moved from their own neighborhoods across the city in wild demos and towards Sants, probably making it more difficult for the police to contain them, and also providing the opportunity for those less experienced participants to join in taking the streets.

"Around 5,000 people marched in the rain from Plaça de Sants to Plaza España. The people refused to disperse, and confronted a huge police deployment. Rioting started and, for the second time in their history, the militarized police, the *mossos d'esquadra*, used tear gas.

"The police quickly took Carrer de Sants, but they had to fight at every street corner to arrive at the streets around the neighborhood. Demonstrators split up; people defended themselves fighting in groups of 50 to 500.

"The third night, a smaller number of hammers, picks and Molotov cocktails appeared, and fewer projectiles were thrown except when protesters came across glass containers and construction sites. At one building site located in Plaça de la Farga, right across the street from the building of an anarchist squat evicted years before, people resisted for at least half an hour, at times forcing the police to retreat and direct their attack to another street.

"Neighbors provided protesters with firecrackers for use against the police. Disturbances lasted from 9:30 p.m. until past midnight. Many neighborhood residents shouted and banged their cooking pots, while others complained and threw stuff at protesters (usually only when fires were set on small streets)."

**B**y May 29, the city council called an end to the demolition, its hand forced by the extensive destruction of equipment, widespread protests, and the announcement by Can Vies that the rebuilding of the social centre would begin two days later.

That day, several work groups started to clear the space and to recover as many bricks as possible. Hundreds of people formed a line, almost a third of a mile long, to pass bricks to the site and deposit rubble outside the district hall. The legitimacy of Can Vies was unquestioned by passersby and small shop keepers, who were curious about the situation.

Joni D.'s statement provides context for this symbolic ac-



tion, undertaken right in the middle of a neighborhood market that closes down the street to cars during the day: "How is it possible to have had elections and, 24 hours later, having Can Vies raided? It is possible precisely because this action was planned for long ago."

**T**he squatters launched a crowdfunding campaign for \$74,200 to rebuild the squat and pay for the legal defense of those arrested that eventually received almost \$95,400.

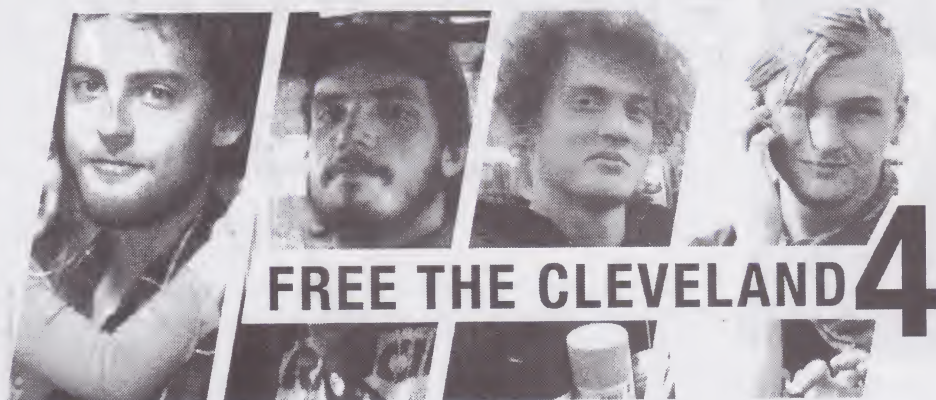
The threat of eviction united two tendencies in the squatting movement: those focusing on mobilization of popular discontent through direct action succeeded in temporarily blocking the eviction, while social advocacy organizations used sophisticated techniques to publicize the resistance. The successful anti-eviction struggle demonstrated the importance of inter-squat solidarity and the effect a diversity of tactics can have in generating powerful resistance.

Squatters organized non-violent actions during the two months prior to the eviction. These included solidarity campaigns on Twitter, the occupation of TMB offices, and symbolic actions at relevant institutional buildings.

Can Vies has been rebuilt and currently hosts daily community activities including political work, and provides a rehearsal room for bands, an audio-visual space and a sewing workshop.

It was clear that only strong, popular opposition would save Can Vies from demolition, and it was so.





## Entrapped Activists Need Movement Support

AMANDA SCHEMKES

**T**he Cleveland 4 need continued movement support as they deal with harsh sentences resulting from the interest that the government has in orchestrating terrorism convictions.

The Cleveland 4 are Brandon Baxter, Connor Stevens, Doug Wright, and Joshua Stafford, a group of young Occupy activists who were entrapped into a government-created terrorism plot to blow up a bridge in 2012.

They were sentenced to almost a decade in federal prison followed by lifetime supervised release due to a terrorism enhancement.

As the Occupy Cleveland encampment fell apart and the four men were struggling to deal with poverty, addiction, mental health issues, and the loss of community, a paid government informant, Shaquille Azir, preyed upon their vulnerability and need for support and pulled them into a web of manipulation.

Azir gave them jobs, money, food, alcohol, drugs, and promised to help them and their families, and the remnants of Occupy with financial support.

He spent months coercing or insisting that they participate in a plot to place fake, government-supplied explosives at the base of a bridge in Cleveland.

Such coercion has been a common pattern since 9/11: The FBI creates a terrorism plot, entraps vulnerable young men in it, and then captures the fabricated terrorists—allowing the government to manipulate the public into accepting

any form of surveillance or violence employed in the name of counter-terrorism efforts.

In this case, prosecuting the Cleveland 4 served the added purpose of allowing the government to effectively chill any inclination people may have had to be involved with Occupy, identify as anarchists, criticize the corporate State, or effectively challenge the status quo.

The Cleveland 4 lost their appeal of the terrorism enhancement. They've endured time in high security prisons, done long stretches in solitary confinement,

**Write to the Cleveland 4; send them books, donate to their commissary fund.**

Brandon Baxter #57972-060  
FCI Terre Haute  
PO Box 33  
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Connor Stevens #57978-060  
FCI Manchester  
PO Box 4000  
Manchester, KY 40962

Doug Wright #57973-060  
FCI Edgefield  
PO Box 725  
Edgefield, SC 29824

Joshua Stafford #57976-060  
USP Coleman I  
PO Box 1033  
Coleman, FL 33521

and have their communications subjected to heightened monitoring,

Brandon, Connor, Doug, and Joshua need increased and continued support to send the message that such government tactics won't frighten resistance movements out of organizing, out of growing, or out of challenging State power.

Although locked down hard, Brandon has written, "I've lived my time incarcerated by the philosophy that no one can take this time from me unless I choose to let them, that so long as I spend each day productively, then that time is not wasted; it's still mine."

Visit the Cleveland 4 Solidarity website at [Cleveland4Solidarity.org/](http://Cleveland4Solidarity.org/), follow Cleveland 4 Solidarity on Facebook at [facebook.com/freethe4/](https://www.facebook.com/freethe4/) and on Twitter at [twitter.com/FreeCleveland4](https://twitter.com/FreeCleveland4).

Amanda Schemkes is a grassroots organizer and lawyer, who does support work for political prisoners.

## OTHER PRISON NEWS

### BARRETT BROWN RELEASED

Investigative journalist Barrett Brown was released from federal prison in late November and sent to a halfway house outside Dallas.

Brown is the founder of Project PM, a crowd-sourced investigation into the cyber-industrial complex.

He spent 28 months behind bars on charges related to the hacking of the private intelligence firm, Stratfor, exposing how the firm spied on activists on behalf of corporations.

Brown was targeted for investigating the highly secretive world of private intelligence and military contractors.

Before entering prison, Brown said, "The U.S. government decided today that because I did such a good job at investigating the cyber-industrial complex, they're now going to send me to investigate the prison-industrial complex."

As part of a plea bargain to avoid a possible 100 year sentence, he pleaded guilty in 2014 to some of the charges, including transmitting threats, accessory to a cyber-attack and obstruction of justice.

More Prison News Continued on P.44



# THE Revolted! Show

A Political Art Show — January 22-February 12, 2017

Produced by 333 Midland at their Annex Gallery, Highland Park, Michigan [www.333Midland.com](http://www.333Midland.com)

Curator: Rick Cronn

33 Artists; 66 works

333 Midland is located in a complex of abandoned post-industrial factories brought back to life by a renaissance of Detroit artists.

Fifteen percent of art sales of Revolted! went to support the Detroit IWW's Wobbly Kitchen's bi-monthly event which feeds hundreds of homeless and forgotten workers.

## "Throne for a Clown"

Cary Loren, found urinal, gold paint, stickers

Loren's piece celebrates the 100th anniversary of Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain," which outraged the art world in 1917.

Loren says his piece also references, "Trump's psychosexual "golden shower" episode which was rumored to have been video taped by Russian agents for *kompro-mat* and future blackmail. Also, videos with Trump boasting about his expensive golden bathroom fixtures.



Mike Ross



"Meanwhile in Heaven..." Taurus Burns

"Luddite" Peter Daniel Bernal, oil on canvas





## The war on the elderly

# Republican attacks on social insurance open the door to anarchist solutions

ERIC LAURSEN

**N**ow that Donald J. Trump has brought bogus right-wing populism back to the White House and Congress is under firm Republican control, serious talk about gutting Social Security and Medicare is again coursing through Washington.

This is, as Trump would say, yuuuge. Social Security and Medicare are the two biggest and most critically important public programs in the country. Over 65 million retirees, spouses and children of deceased workers, and disabled persons receive Social Security benefits every month; some 55 million retirees receive hospital insurance coverage under Medicare Part A. If these programs didn't exist, tens of millions would be plunged into poverty.

But why, as anarchists, should we care especially about Social Security and Medicare?

Don't they just make working people more dependent on government and less motivated to develop structures of cooperative care that don't make them dependent on the State and the money economy?

Shouldn't we instead focus on creating cooperative networks that we control and that can't be snatched away by right-wing politicians?

**M**any anarchists—and even conservative trade unionists like Samuel Gompers—asked these questions a century ago, when the idea of universal old-age and health insurance was first being explored in the U.S.

The answer is that these programs are not so simple. Social Security and Medicare Part A are forms of social insurance. Workers contribute a portion of their wages, which earn them the right to a guaranteed income and



Poster: Ernesto Yrena. One of many available for free download at [theamplifierfoundation.org](http://theamplifierfoundation.org). Hundreds of them were put up all over Washington for the Trump inauguration.

health coverage once they hit old age.

They are also a form of intergenerational solidarity. Contributions by today's workers are used to pay benefits to today's retirees. Once today's workers are retired themselves, tomorrow's workers will be making contributions to cover their old-age costs. Social Security and Medicare Part A are self-funded through those contributions, which means that unlike welfare programs, they belong, in a very real sense, to the collectivity who make those contributions and receive benefits from them.

**Why should anarchists care about Social Security & Medicare?**

**S**ocial insurance programs of various kinds, including workers' compensation and unemployment insurance, were first introduced in Germany during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the conservative German chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. Although these programs drew directly from the concept of mutual aid as developed by thinkers like French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, many European governments adopted them as a way to make workers feel that they had a stake in the State and the capitalist system. >>>>



## The State, slowly but surely, is getting out of the business of social insurance. That leaves the field open to anarchist solutions.

But the far more conservative American business and economic elite opposed social insurance right up to its implementation in the Social Security Act of 1935 and have been fighting for close to 40 years now to tear it down.

Many conservatives like to portray themselves as anti-government or small-government libertarians. They're not, of course. Many of the same people never saw a Pentagon budget, a law enforcement establishment, or a surveillance apparatus that was too big for them.

What they don't like is any institution or program that provides benefits on a collective basis and with cooperative funding and thus promotes social and intergenerational solidarity. Programs like these minimize people's dependence on the market and suggest the possibility of economic solutions outside the capitalist system.

That's why, with the election of Trump and for the first time since the Bush administration's disastrous attempt to sell Social Security privatization to a skeptical nation more than a decade ago, Republicans see an opportunity to dismantle these programs.

Trump's assurances on the campaign trail that he didn't want to go after Social Security are not to be taken seriously. His past utterances make clear that if Congress found a politically safe way to do so, he'd gladly go along.

And even if congressional conservatives fail to convince the president to go along with their schemes, these programs—and the people who support and depend on them—are reaching a major historical crossroads, one that may be more visible to those of us who think outside the boundaries of the State.

**L**iberal opposition has so far succeeded in keeping Social Security and Medicare from being destroyed. But the last time Congress passed a major expansion or improvement in Social Security was more than 40 years ago.

Meanwhile, the other pillars of old-age income security in the US, employer-based pensions, private savings, have steadily eroded. A retirement crisis is threatening that leaves the elderly without resources and instead forces their families and communities to figure out how to support them. Efforts by progressives like Sen. Bernie Sanders to expand Social Security to fill the gap have gone nowhere.

While options under the existing political structure are shrinking, the need for retirement security is growing. By 2050, 83.7 million people will be age 65 and older, almost double the 43.1 million in 2012, according to the US Census Bureau, and much the same is expected in many other countries.

Even if we prefer not to, we need to think outside the current, government-orchestrated social insurance system to develop solutions to the retirement crisis.

Ideas are out there. As far back as the 1970s, the visionary Gray Panthers movement promoted intergenerational housing in which young and old shared skills, expertise, and wisdom to build new communities. The Panthers created self-run clinics that addressed the needs of the elderly at a time when geriatric care was rare, which it still is in many places.

The Meidner Plan, a next-step evolution of social insurance attempted in Sweden at about the same time, proposed gradually transferring ownership of much of private business to a network of locally-based pension funds that could then use the capital to pay benefits and invest in sustainable, locally-based economies, each reinforcing the other.

**T**oday, the LGBT community in San Francisco is coming together to create retirement resources for aging members. In New York and elsewhere, social workers are identifying "naturally occurring retirement communities" (NORCs): neighborhoods and apartment buildings with high concentrations of elderly who can pool resources and otherwise assist each other and leverage the services they need. Meanwhile, home-care workers, one of the most overworked and underpaid elements of the workforce, are organizing and demanding better pay and benefits.

Cooperative solutions like these aren't the same as anarchism, but with their focus on decentralization, cooperation, and affinity, they point in similar directions. And, they are going to become more necessary even if the latest right-wing efforts to undermine Social Security and Medicare fail.

Another way to look at it is that an aging population gives us the opportunity to rethink the way generations interact and to visualize a society that doesn't rely on markets and monolithic government programs.

The State, slowly but surely, is getting out of the business of social insurance. That leaves the field open to anarchist solutions.

Eric Laursen is a writer and activist living in Massachusetts. His most recent book is *The People's Pension: The Struggle to Defend Social Security Since Reagan* (AK Press, 2012).

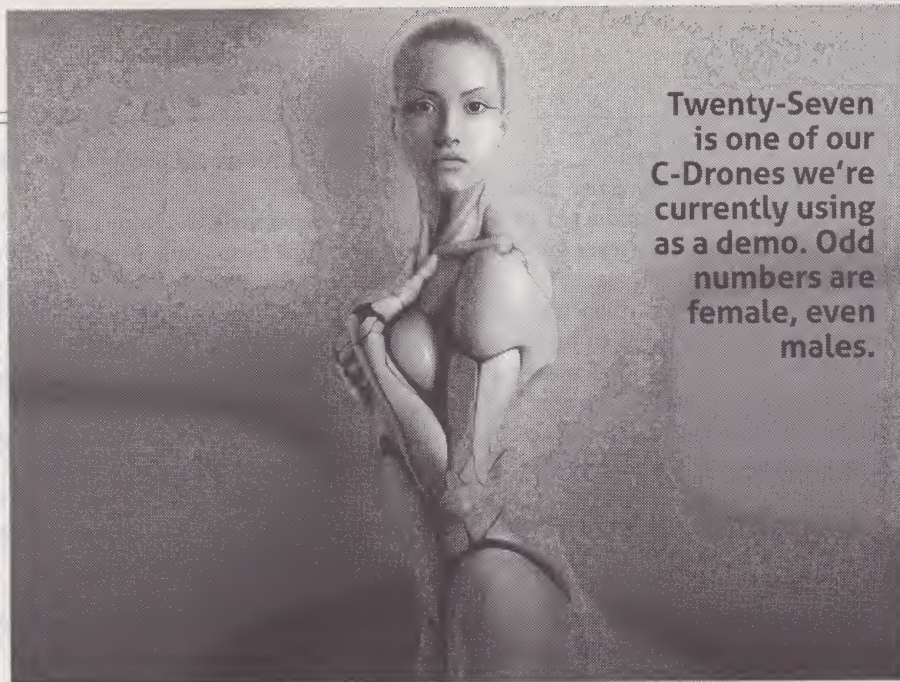
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## FICTION



Twenty-Seven is one of our C-Drones we're currently using as a demo. Odd numbers are female, even males.

# This Is BioMorph

GARY IVES

Welcome to BioMorph. I'm Herb Fanley. You've read the brochures and watched our holograms I see. Please have a seat and I'll be happy to answer your questions."

"Would you care for coffee? Good. We can relax a little before we get to your questions and take the opportunity to have a good look at a C-Drone."

"Have you any experience with C-Drones? No? Well, let me introduce you."

"Twenty-Seven, fetch a three coffee service, sales room."

"Twenty-Seven is one of our C-Drones we're currently using as a demo. Odd numbers are female, even males. You can have a good look at her; she'll be here with the coffee momentarily."

Just then a handsome young woman entered the sales room pushing a tea cart with a silver coffee service and an assortment of pastries. One could say her face was cherubic—rosy cheeks, blue eyes, a shock of blond hair covering her forehead, although the face was absolutely expressionless.

Twenty-Seven's eyes appeared to look past you as she deftly served coffee first to me, then to my husband and Mr. Fanley. She wore a one piece powder blue jumpsuit.

Once we had been served, she stepped back two paces and faced Mr. Fanley who ordered her to extend her arms and to turn around for our inspection.

Then, I was much taken aback and I'm certain I blushed when he ordered Twenty Seven to disrobe. The C-Drone unzipped and stepped from the jumpsuit completely naked exposing beautiful breasts, a flat abdomen, and pubic hair above shapely long legs.

"Oh please don't be embarrassed Mrs. Riley, C-Drones have absolutely no feelings. None at all, not a whit of feelings or sentiment. This may seem extreme, but there's extensive evidence supported by research that tells us that the more familiar a client becomes early on, the easier adaptability ensues. Stand easy there, Twenty-Seven."

Twenty-Seven took a place against the wall standing there lovely, beautifully proportioned, although completely expressionless.

Allow me to back up just a bit. Six weeks ago when I had received the diagnosis, Dr. Perriman asked that I seriously consider a head transplant to a C-drone.

"The prognosis in cases of this disease is always poor," he said, "which makes a head transplant a godsend and fortunately you have the means. Many do not." True, we had the means. My husband, Frederick Riley, is the Chief Financial Officer for Interstellar Mining and Transport.

You may be familiar with IMT's successful mining enterprises on our moon, Mars, and the distant Jovian moon, Io. The costs of a first rate head transplant could exceed a million Earth Credits, a sum easily borne by my husband.

The surgical process developed and perfected by the Fen Wa Corporation in Hong Kong thirty years earlier was now becoming routine among our class of people, Les Capitalists, never mind the yammering and howls from the undeserving lower classes, Les Proles, and Les Communes.

The process got better and better once Fen Wa laboratories merged with the French National Laboratory where successful cloning procedures had evolved into the full scale production of C-Drones. Fen Wa's C-Drones, Mu and Nu versions, were in full production. With each new generation, the prices decreased. Original Alphas came at a staggering 30 million E



Credits.

Mr. Fanley went on to explain the procedure and answer our many questions. The operations were conducted by a team of three experienced surgeons aided by several robots. "Takes less than two hours," he said.

Mrs. Riley will spend a night in recovery, then transfer to Motor Skills Therapy where she'll get used to her new body. Within ten days to two weeks, most patients walk out of our clinic ready to hike, swim, bicycle and," he lowered his voice to say, "and to make love! Though, of course, you realize, while the pleasure of love making exists, C-Drone bodies are completely sterile."

Mr. Fanley went on to invite us to examine Twenty-Seven closely. "Touch the C-Drone if you wish; it's completely acceptable. Yes, it's recommended, actually."

Should I have felt the jealousy I did as I embarrassingly watched Frederick fondle the C-Drone. But then a C-Drone

identical to this would become me with the head transplant, wouldn't she?

Just then a male C-Drone entered. "Here you can see I've asked Eighteen to come in also. I thought you might wish to see and inspect one of our masculine models; he's good looking, isn't he? Undress Eighteen! Go ahead, feel free to get personal," Mr. Fanley invited.

That afternoon at the contract signing, Frederick surprised me as he looked at Mr. Fanley, then at me, and said "Fanley, you're one hell of a salesman, you are. Yes, we'll take the two for one offer. Sign us both up."

"Splendid, splendid. Did you know that many BioMorph head transplant patients take advantage of our face transplant offer? Here's the brochure."

Gary Ives lives in the Ozarks where he grows apples and writes.



## (Re)Thinking Music & Revolution

LUIS CHÁVEZ

**Consider destroying (or purposefully forgetting) your headphones.**

Whether you live in a city or rural area, the daily use

of headphones physically and aurally blocks your connection to the surrounding sonic environment. Listening as a way of knowing is lost to listening as a way of consuming.

A *SFGate* news story, "Absorbed Device Users Oblivious to Danger," recounts a 2013 incident on a San Francisco light rail train that illustrates one of the many dangerous consequences of alienation created by industrial, technological society.

The article describes the random killing of a San Francisco State University student by a lone gunman. The gunman pulled a gun out numerous times while casually walking around the crowded car without notice by passengers on the train. The other riders, shown in a surveillance video, remain affixed to their personal electronic devices, and most are wearing earbuds completely unaware of the man with a gun.

**S**ecluded and enwrapped in our electronics, personal listening devices alienate us from the world. No one on the train communicated the dangers to one another because all were too busy with their aural and visual utopias on the way to their next train stop.

The diverse sounds of our environment and connection with other human beings is standardized and quantified into mono aural affixation that helps us cope with getting from point A to point B without being bothered. We learn to love our alienation.

Experimenting with leaving your headphones behind creates numerous possibilities of connecting sounds in the environment to our sensual bodies like different animal species, a transformer blowing up, wind gusts. Diversity of sounds offer points of contact that you may not be used to or create reaction challenges.

This is OK. Explore the way these sounds contact you and your reactions to them.

For example, a conversation that might not have happened, had you stayed in your headphone cocoon, could generate new knowledge for that day and introduce a human condition that may not have happened. The different sounds in your environment can cause you to interact and generate new thoughts. >>>>



The possibilities are endless and you will feel more connected to your environment. You are now actively *listening* instead of passively *hearing*.

The word music derives from the Greek *mousike*, which means the art of the muses. The Greek definition describes a creative art of composing or inspiration from the gods channeled through humanly organized sounds. Channeling inspiration from the muses for creative purposes is through human action and is human-centric.

The basic definition of music in our society is any human organized sound. In other societies, music is not a separate category from other forms of human communication or expression. For example, many indigenous groups practice music within ceremony and dance.

The label, music, is not just human-centric, but is Western European-centric. Not every culture has a word for our understanding of music. A continuity exists from constructed notions of Ancient Greek culture, such as the idealization of democracy, which permeate our current epoch and political organization. From ancient Greece to the Renaissance to modernity, there exists the idea that all great things come from ancient Greek culture in a linear divine coronation, music being one of them.

Currently, as with many of Western society's ideas of human civilization, our modern notion of music (starting in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) derives from modernity's attempt at creating rational and scientific idealizations of society. The rationalizing of sound comes from Enlightenment thought reflecting the larger Enlightenment idea of humans dominating the natural material world. Western European thought applied to music, created a musical system reflecting civilization's idealized notion of organizing wild sounds.

The construction of instruments, such as the keyboard (harpsichord), served as tools of measurement for expressing a rational approach to music, such as in the contrapuntal Baroque style of concert music. New instruments expressed notions of mathematical precision of sound and led to the construction of an ideal of music that has dominated the rest of the globe today through electronic technology and globalization.

The musical system created along with other forms of technology for dominating the wildness of the world is tonal music, or tonality. Tonal music favors using scales to build pitch relationships. A musical scale is a collection, or measurement, of pitches that express an idealization of numbers naturally found in the universe by mathematically dividing pitches on a monochord or string.

The creation of tonality derived from the Enlightenment's fascination with pitch relationship, leading to codifying the Euro-Western pitch relationships as if they were naturally discovered, already existing, in the environment. The naturalization of this musical system now dominates the rest of the globe and continues to acculturate mass society with a mono-musical system fueled by industrial technologies.

Tonal music dominates Euro-Western culture from mo-



**Engaging with wild sounds actively works against electronic technology's musical culture that separates mind from sensual body.**

dernity forward, and because of globalization, electronic technology, and colonization, the global impact has been the creation of a homogenous listening culture. We lack the patience and pleasure to listen to the environment around us and engage with interspecies or object relationships that create wild sounds.

We learn that music is for the specialists and professionals, but forget that we are active participants of humanly organized sounds in our local environments. The birds "sing," the rooster "crows," the wind "whispers," and the oceans "roar"—if we listen.

Engaging with sounds in their ability to affect our sensorium helps reconnect our body and mind. Engaging with wild sounds actively works against electronic technology's musical culture that separates mind from sensual body.

Tonal music, now ubiquitous with modern electronic devices, is a component of the technological system that has domesticated and alienated humans.

This essay begins a discourse on solutions to industrial music technology. Explore new sounds. Experimenting with new aural environments will create active participants and generate new ways of thinking about the world.

It will spark our creative side and help contribute to our awareness and destruction of the way that music intersects with our present society.

Luis Chavez lives in the Bay Area where he writes about music and sound. His latest work is on decolonizing music studies.





# Social Technologies & Politics

## Police Body Cams: How they hurt those who are supposed to be helped

MATEO PIMENTEL

**A**s the importance of social technologies increases, many users fail to pay sufficient critical attention to the political incursions that such technologies invite.

Millions who cannot fathom life without social technologies are, in all likelihood, the same demographic that is most willing to excuse the political transgressions these technologies engender—particularly not if the consequent harm affects people other than themselves.

For example, the police state has routinized extra-judicial killings in America's black and brown communities. In response, liberal reformers advocate a nationwide adoption of body cameras by police departments.

By placing body cameras on thousands of officers, these reformers hope for a drastic drop in the number of police killings and brutality. They hang their hopes on the new visual record of police cruelty. Footage of the police shooting black Americans and others, their argument goes, will make it no longer so easy for the authorities to ignore, or for the media to brush aside.

Though it happens regularly across a spectrum of devices and digital platforms, profiling and surveillance is illegal to differing extents. And, it may be unconstitutional for the state to invade citizens' personal lives with technologies like body cams.

Nevertheless, the public outcry for these devices on po-

lice officers allows the state to monitor, with unprecedented closeness, the actions of all individuals in the public sphere, especially those whom it has systematically targeted well before the advent of the body cam.

This is precisely in keeping with what critical technologists mean when they assert that technologies have a politics.

That is, in lieu of addressing the fact that police already wield lethal weapons in an often illegal manner, or that specific laws disproportionately have affected specific ethnic communities for decades, some reformers are uncritically willing to give the state a front row seat at virtually every traffic and pedestrian stop.

It is much easier to delegate a misplaced sense of civic duty to a watchful technology than actually confront the racism inherent in the policing and judicial institutions of the state. Hence, the line of thinking that espouses body cameras also tends to "eclipse other sorts of moral and political reasoning," as technologist Langdon Winner writes. Ultimately, it is imperative that technology users recognize that important technologies in their lives remain capable of wreaking havoc on the "moral and political" rights and liberties of others.

Mateo Pimentel is a borderland denizen and graduate student at Arizona State University. He writes for political newsletters and alternative news sources, as well as academic journals. His coauthored book, *Capitalism, Justice, and Democratic Political Economy*, will be published later this year.



# Virtuality, Sociopathy & Hyperabsence

The time is ripe for  
resistance

**BRYAN TUCKER**

The work/sleep, shop/discard, lose/win, simulated existence that is thrust upon us is fundamentally forced participation in an electro-sociopathic process.

With computer mediation steadily consuming discourse life is increasingly lived behind, and for, a screen. As contemporary civilization continues this conversion into omnipresent, digitized drudgery, antisocial propensities mushroom, a listless insatiability abounds, while feelings and insight are left behind.

Friedrich Nietzsche, in his 1878 *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, describes constrained spirits as characters able to envisage only limited possibility and a tendency to oppose expansive, unconventional types.

From the boredom and dissatisfaction of the constrained spirit, a destructive ambition arises that is aimed at annihilating the wellbeing, sensibility, and interconnections of the less constricted. These sociopathic, egotistical creatures, who dominate modern civilization, set their sights on destructing and disfiguring any manifestation not in the image of the constrained spirit.

Further instances of this destruction include prison and military industrial complexes, police state apparatuses, and attacks upon the vulnerable.

In conjunction with the digitized economic Darwinism that presides over most of daily life, comes a relationally nihilistic process which liquidates receptivity and friendship. One manifestation of this is the commonplace phenomena of people with a social network, but without sincere companionship who spend the bulk of their constricted lives virtually existing, and existing virtually, with their machine screens.

In this insatiable, consume to exist and exist to consume



system, where the majority of touch is reserved for the touchscreen, friendship is increasingly considered pointless.

To put it in corresponding (and horrifying) neoliberal terms, relationships have become de-incentivized since these are not economically rational phenomena. Spending too much time focusing on relations doesn't allow the individual consumer to achieve maximal cost/benefit efficiency.

In addition to the annihilation of relationships and expressivity, economic and political processes are in place that complicate, pervert, and bureaucratize the development and communication of ideas that otherwise could be articulated about the violent, alienating methods underlying the social order.

Examples of these obfuscations include celebrity worship, repetitive platitudes, fallacies about democracy, and identifying as a consumer. Vital aspects of interaction such as transparency and empathy are obscured or disallowed in dominant culture, while trivial, abstract edifices are erected, such as brands, sports teams, and fashion fads that imprison the mind, divert the instincts, and buttress the distortion and mystification processes.

In the current social media saturated existence, the link to instinct, intuition, and the untamed is converted into a tenuous bond to static, dissociated images, sound bites, and blurbs. This attachment to cold, instantaneous depictions severs and replaces our connection to historic and organic phases and tempos, and orients people towards capturing and away from experiencing.

An effect of this paralysis is a reduction of the capacity of a section of the populace to conceive of evolution, transformation, or revolution. Perhaps the most farcical aspect of social media inundation is that this apparatus tends to work exceedingly well for solipsistic self-aggrandizement.

Corresponding to the excessive presentation of marketable techno-countenances is an agonized or anesthetized bodily core. Dissociated, deadened states, or conversely, states of apprehension, agitation, and despair, correlate with egocentric immersion in formalized, parameterized information deliv-



ery/reception processes.

In *Revolt Against Poetry*, avant-gardist Antonin Artaud, asserts that “heart is what isn’t my ego” and “to love his ego is to love death,” illustrating the difference between the vitality of embodied intuition and the lifelessness or anguish corresponding with being stuck in persona.

Those not numbed by self-absorbed virtuality are left with a choice to experience a painful subjectivity, or take anesthetizing drugs, and many are inclined to opt for numbness, hence the proliferation of psychotropic usage and the rampant opioid epidemic.

Aside from the conspicuous hollowness of existence in the digitized hyperabsence, it is more and more apparent that status quo economics and politics are beyond restructuring and that radical change is the only feasible corollary. The overtly divisive, xenophobic personalities of many of the Western

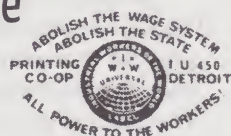
predators-in-chief that are taking over are increasingly congruent with the psychopathic processes to which the body politic is subjected.

The perpetual problem of how people who want an unrefined, unreified, free-spirited existence preserve and defend space without themselves becoming rigidified, one-dimensional, or callous is as pressing as ever. We exist in an inflamed tinderbox, with a largely disaffected populace, and a decaying establishment steering the ship in increasingly entropic direction. For those able to release themselves from the diversions and simulations, the present is a time that is ripe for resistance, splintering, and a multitude of possibilities.

Bryan Tucker has been involved with various anti-war efforts and social anarchist projects in the Bay Area for the past decade.

## Black & Red Books Now Out-of-Print Influenced the Fifth Estate

Reprinting of them urged



2016 exhibit at 9338 Campau Gallery in Hamtramck, Mich. of Black & Red Books and graphics. IWW union label from many of the titles.

Although many of the influential radical titles from Black & Red Books, printed at the Detroit-based Detroit Printing Co-op between 1970-1980 are out of print, their relevance hasn’t lessened with the passing years. It is hoped there is interest in republishing them.

The books contain repressed histories, critiques from ultra-left, council communist, and anarchist sources. Discovering the works of Fredy Perlman, Jacques Camatte, Guy Debord, and others through B&R books contained the ideas that energized this publication to continue printing at a time of political quietism.

B&R continues sending its available titles through mail order, but currently has no plans to reprint those which have run out.

The Detroit Printing Co-op was a collective project where members set up and learned the printing craft in order to publish ideas and books in which commercial enterprises had no interest. The first English translation of Guy Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* came from the Co-op which became quite renowned in

political and critical theory circles.

It is now available through university presses, although we recommend Ken Knabb’s Bureau of Public Secrets edition, which is also online at [bopsecrets.org/SI/debord](http://bopsecrets.org/SI/debord).

Ambitious four-color projects like Michael Velli’s *Manual for Revolutionary Leaders* preceded 800-page texts like Voline’s *The Unknown Revolution*, the best history of the Russian Revolution chronicling the role of anarchists and counter-revolutionary activities of the Bolsheviks.

The equally large *Letters of Insurgents*, by Fredy Perlman, is an exchange of letters between political radicals in Eastern Europe and North America. This important book has been reprinted by Seattle’s Left Bank Books. [LeftBankBooks.com](http://LeftBankBooks.com)

G. Munis and John Zerzan’s essays in *Unions Against Revolution* contains critiques of organized labor.

Maurice Brinton’s *The Irrational*



*in Politics*, is an excellent summary of Wilhelm Reich’s theories of the development of authoritarian personalities. Highly relevant today! Camatte’s *The Wandering of Humanity*, a text which greatly influenced the *Fifth Estate* staff of that era and continues to do so today, discusses the domestication of humanity to capital, and how capital itself has run away from human control.

None of these works is copyrighted by Black & Red, and can be freely reprinted.

B&R can provide copies of some of the printed books, and many are available online. The text would have to be scanned or re-typeset. Write B&R, POB 02374, Detroit MI 48202.

The B&R current list still contains books of great interest which are highly recommended. [BlackAndRed.org](http://BlackAndRed.org).



# Busking behind the Barricades

## A Busker's Adventure

David Rovics

Various e-book formats at

davidrovics.com/busker, 2016

## BILL BLANK

David Rovics hails from a long lineage of gifted topical American folk guitar singers originally birthed by Joe Hill, Woody Guthrie, Lead Belly, and Pete Seeger, with blazing torches passed on through its most notable stepchildren, Joan Baez, Phil Ochs, Tom Paxton and, of course, Bob Dylan, at least before he “went electric” (as alarmingly noted in that 1965 first issue of the *Fifth Estate*).

As with many of these protest troubadours, Rovics’ consistent strength has been his poetic voice rather than his vocals. Combined with a relentless street-level anarchistic determination to continuously confront the politics of the day, his singing commentaries often surface long before such disquieting reports make any headlines.

With the possible exception of Brit folk-punker, Billy Bragg, no protest singer since the mid-1990s has logged in more causes and causeways armed only with guitar, backpack, and maybe enough change to make it to the next rally.

My own 15-year, mostly failed attempt at such musical notoriety, partially sustains my awe for the sheer volume of Rovics’ ever growing, usually free and readily available catalogue.

He posts YouTube videos often several times a week, sometimes now accompanying himself with an electric cello, while weekly fan list emails will often feature his latest song from the road or the barricades.

Touring the protest circuit has never been lucrative, and in the internet age, it seems even easier to fade into the digital cloud of overwhelming overload (or

quit music for other artistic pursuits), yet Rovics continues unrelenting travels nationally and globally with his issue-driven songs.

A quick sample of this protest pedigree can be found with his popular remake of Woody Guthrie’s “Sacco and Vanzetti.” His subversive, “Who Would Jesus Bomb,” “We Are Everywhere” “The Riot Dog” and “They’re Building a Wall,” seem to be the most timelessly familiar, and even more timely in this age of fake news and fake presidential populism.

Somehow, Rovics (now the father of two as he relates on his website), has managed to keep writing, recording, protesting, and touring while maintaining a family unit which would seem like quite the interesting memoir if he ever found time to self-reflect and expand upon his modest 2013 first road chronicle, *Have Guitar, Will Travel*.

Instead, a baby parenting interlude found him writing and releasing his first “semi-autobiographical” novel, *A Busker’s Adventure*, featuring a politically-aware, highly skilled street musician named Casey from Boston (like Rovics), who visits Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Hamburg, skirmishing with police and finding love before driving some risky cargo from Florida to Colorado with an eye on revolutionary events in late 1980s El Salvador.

I (along with many anti-authoritar-

ian, neo-Luddites) really hate e-books (currently the only available download form of this novel). My slight disappointment could be more with the sleep-inducing mind-wandering medium than with the somewhat reserved prose. The novel does mythically close with a reversed failed revolution, a dose of grin-triggering hope for even the most cynical reader.

Still, those desiring more intimate, electrifying non-fiction, including Rovics’ recent travel difficulties with certain borders in an elevated dissident status (especially New Zealand), will have to settle (for now) with his occasional journalistic insights in various periodicals and on-line self-publishing and his prolific mastery of the topical folk song.

His one minor flaw might be over-extending himself from time to time into too many rough draft expressions of his perceptive power unless perhaps he knows more than we do, that our race against time will really run out if we don’t change the world soon.

David Rovics will always be an inspiring musical force and truly talented comrade from our greater anti-authoritarian milieu.

Bill Blank’s alter-ego writes plays and teaches high school Social Studies a mile north of the Detroit 8 Mile Road border, and has contributed numerous articles to the *Fifth Estate*.







—Beth Garon from cover of *Breaking Loose*

In a 1967 “Wall Street is War Street” march, twenty five men in black wearing balaclavas and skull faces marched against capitalism and for “total revolution”

realist Movement, 1995).

In this vision, the flames of the radical imaginary would be reignited on the barricades.

In this same incendiary spirit, the New York-based and surrealist-inspired revolutionary artists’ group, Black Mask, had earlier quoted Andre Breton’s maxim: “Authentic art goes hand-in-hand with revolutionary activity,” in one of the group’s initial theoretical statements, “Art and Revolution.”

The quote, which was supplied to them by Franklin Rosemont of the Chicago Surrealist Group, led

them to urge artists to make an exodus from the galleries into the streets.

In their confrontational 1967 “Wall Street is War Street” march, twenty five men in black wearing balaclavas and skull faces marching against capitalism and for “total revolution” projected a militant identity that can be seen to have been a seminal influence on future radical street tactics.

As art historian Gavin Grindon has acutely observed, “This was the first use of collective, masked-up black dress during a demonstration in an urban centre among Western social movements. As this style was combined with the tactics of breakaway groups, police confrontation, and property damage, the group anticipated, and perhaps indirectly influenced, the style and tactics of later “black bloc” groups which emerged en masse among 1980s German autonomen.”

As time went by, Black Mask would increasingly emphasize anarchist direct action tactics, renaming themselves the Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers in solidarity with the burgeoning black liberation movement of the times.

This brings us to the Ferguson uprising of 2014 in the States which was kicked off by a deadly incident of police brutality in which Michael Brown was murdered by the forces of law and order. As Crimethlnc reported firsthand, the complexity of insurrectionary events there was played out in relation to an internal struggle for meaning that unfolded among the diverse participants in the uprising.

In their words:

“Liberal leaders and authoritarian groups have far and wide fought hard for control of the narrative in Ferguson. The recuperative power of the black left was in full effect, expressed via an array of tactics to discredit everyone who could not be reconciled with the state. Despite the forces arrayed against them, many people in Ferguson were determined to gain control of the streets, and pushed the would be managers aside” (Crimethlnc, 2015).

In contrast to the pacifying managerial narrative emanat-

## Surrealism on the Barricades

excerpt from

*Breaking Loose: Mutual Acquiescence or Mutual Aid?*  
LBC Books, 2015, [lbcbooks.org](http://lbcbooks.org)

RON SAKOLSKY

Back in 1995, as the banlieues burned, the Paris Surrealist group put out a tract entitled *Warning Lights: A Surrealist Statement on the Recent Riots in France*, delineating the unrealized potential of such multi-racial uprisings in the inner suburban immigrant quarters to spread across the country.

In this publication, the Paris Group dreamed out loud that the stark despair that initially fueled the riots could transform itself from a purely destructive trigger for the cathartic enactment of localized rage into a concurrent vehicle for a deeper and more widespread rebellion.

As they expressed it:

“The rulers have been given a good hotfoot and have been forced to unmask themselves. Where the police abuse their powers, the state of emergency gives to their abuse the legitimacy that it lacks. In a flash, such warning lights have revealed the return of a possibility that seemed to be lost: that of throwing power into panic. From now on, we can imagine the strength of an uprising that would-beyond the inhabitants of the ghettos-include the whole population suffering from the rise of impoverishment, and would turn into civil war against the organs of capital and the state” (Paris Group of the Sur-



ing from the accomodationist voices of those career activists and erstwhile reformers that sought to narrowly frame these events in civil rights terms; the St. Louis Surrealist Group, in the tradition of not only the above *Warning Lights* diatribe, but of the Chicago Surrealist Group's polemics on the Watts riots of 1965 and 1992, boldly proclaimed:

"Our solution prescribes, among other things, the immediate dissolution of the police and other structures of authority, brutality, exploitation, and conformity, as well as the creation of cities of wonder where people of all races, ethnicities, genders, and other diverse affinities can mix in an environment of creative fecundity based on absolute freedom." (St. Louis Surrealist Group in *Hydrolith 2*, 2014).

Here was an inspired and inspirational negation of mutual acquiescence that at the same time affirmed an exhilarating vision of mutual aid.

The insurrectionary freedom of the riot can be both a freedom to take direct action against police repression by burning a cop car or engaging in an unmediated redistribution of wealth by looting, and a freedom from the illusion that fundamental change can come from within the system. The latter illusion acts as one of the bulwarks of mutual acquiescence.

As Key MacFarlane has pointed out in relation to the Baltimore uprising of 2015, which was triggered by the street-level execution of Freddie Gray by the police, the "nothing to lose" stance of the rioters was a political flashpoint.

"For those who side with it, it rules out the possibility of reform or progress under current structures of mediation. We don't want your shitty low-income apartments the fires say. We want to incinerate every last remnant of a dying generation—from the convenience stores where we give our money to a system that casts us aside, to the churches whose leaders tell us we have sinned. From the apartment buildings where we live, to the senior homes where we go to die. For so long we have paid the rich in complacency, and when we have not we have been shuttled off to prison-to smolder." (MacFarlane, "Rites of Passage," online 2015).

The flames of the riot are disconcerting not only to the powers that be but to their loyal opposition. By dismissing burning and looting as irrational and ineffective, the latter miss their incendiary importance in incinerating the debilitating illusions that buttress mutual acquiescence. Accordingly, they attribute such acts to the political naïveté of the participants or circulate rumors of police infiltration rather than trying to understand them as indicators of radical refusal.

As Scott Jay argues in deflecting the claim that most of those who engaged in the Baltimore riots were merely police agents provocateur:

"There are black people all over the city throwing rocks at the police. We do not need to make up reasons why somebody would do this. The very concern that 'peaceful protest' is being ruined by people throwing things is a completely backward approach to social struggles, usually pushed by liberals



Anarchists tend to be concerned with fronting tactics that avoid re-legitimizing institutions of authority while strategically setting the stage for social revolution.

who really do want to keep protests symbolic for good media coverage and to appeal to the good nature of those in power" (Jay, 2015).

Jay's article evidences a struggle about meaning in relation to rioting that is at once tactical and strategic. Anarchists tend to be concerned with fronting tactics that avoid re-legitimizing institutions of authority while strategically setting the stage for social revolution.

Ron Sakolsky, who has broken loose from the United States, now resides across the border-lie on a little rock in the Salish Sea called Sla-Dai-Aich.

His upcoming book, *Birds of a Feather: Anarcho-Surrealism in Flight* (Eberhardt Press), will be out sometime this Spring.

## FIVE WAYS TO HELP THE FIFTH ESTATE

- 1. Subscribe** Subscribers are a publication's life blood. If you bought this at a news stand, consider subscribing and buying one for a friend or a library.
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- 4. Hold a fundraiser for the FE** A house party or an event not only provides revenue for the magazine, but gets people together that share similar ideas.
- 5. Become an FE Sustainer** Sustainers pledge a certain amount each issue or yearly above the subscription fee to assure our continuing publishing, and receive each issue by First Class mail.



## TRANSLATION



A human supervisor yells at humanoid robot workers in "Real Humans." Nothing has changed with the new technology.

# Human-like Robots

Äkta Människor (Real Humans)

SVT 1 Sweden, 2012. Syndicated in 50 countries including U.S.

## MÉLUSINE VERTELUNE

After watching twenty episodes from two seasons of the Swedish TV series, "Real Humans," I am left with several questions.

It's terrifying to know that there are scientists, particularly in Japan, who are working on creating robots to be both intelligent and human-like.

In a few years, if the scientists reach their goal, it could become difficult to doubt the presence of a genuine mental life inside these machines. But, beyond the stated objectives of medical research, I wonder why anyone would want to have machines that resemble humans and interact with their environment as if they were alive.

Above all, when robots are manufactured in a way that accurately imitates human morphology, would those who procure them anticipate pleasure in abusing or humiliating them, without having to worry about risking punishment? Would the robots deserve any protection?

We already have to fight many different struggles, so that human beings will no longer be considered and treated as objects.

We are still fighting against slavery of all kinds, torture (including commercialized rape), pornography, pedophilic-criminality, parental violence termed "educative," feminicide, infanticide, commercialized surrogate motherhood, organ trafficking, forced marriages, imposed pregnancies, veiling,

All this makes me want to proclaim my joy of being **a living organism endowed with a mental life.**

genital mutilation, polygamy, etc.

It is vital that people break with what is called anthropocentrism, but which would be more accurately described as androcentrism (viewing living beings as machines). The political function of this dogma is to separate the human species from other animals while justifying considering those other animals to be objects.

People need to learn to be truly concerned about other human beings as well as about other animals and the entire planet.

It is important to become reconciled with our animality, to realize that the conflict between culture and nature is a false dichotomy invented by patriarchy, one that condemns some people to lead zombie lives, submissive and resigned, while others are insensitive, egotistical, and violent.

But these scientists, instead of trying to create a living being as did Doctor Who [in the British sci-fi TV series], are working on developing humanized robots, robotized humans to simulate living beings.

All this makes me want to proclaim my joy of being a living organism endowed with a mental life, which, thanks to its sensitive and mortal body, is connected to the universe in which it evolved.

Yes, I am happy to be an animal—i.e., precisely the opposite of a thing.

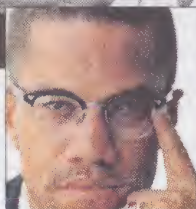
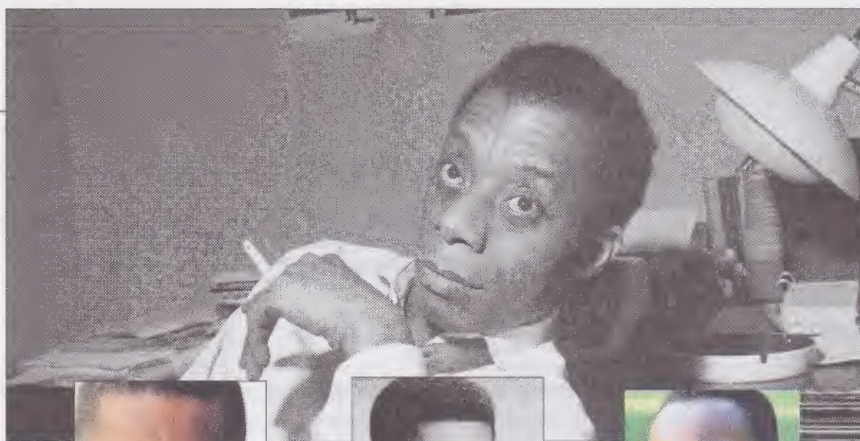
Mélusine Vertelune is a member of the Collectif Libertaire Anti-Sexiste, and co-author with Jeanne Cordelier of *Ni silence, ni pardon: L'inceste : un viol institué* (Neither Silence Nor Pardon: Incest is Institutionalized Rape).

This originally appeared in the January 2017 edition of *le Monde Libertaire* (Paris) "A propos de la série suédoise Real Humans." monde-libertaire.fr

Translated from French by the *Fifth Estate* staff.



## FILM REVIEW



Malcolm X



Medgar Evers



Martin Luther King, Jr.

# James Baldwin:

## 3 Friends & Race in America

**I Am Not Your Negro** (2016)

Director: Raoul Peck

Writer: James Baldwin

Narration: Samuel L. Jackson

135 min.

**PETER WERBE**

**T**he title of this documentary about novelist, playwright, poet, and essayist James Baldwin is not spoken as such in the film. Where the line is uttered in this excellent film by Haitian-born director, Raoul Peck, Baldwin tells a British audience, “I am not your. . .” and uses the “N” word to complete his sentence.

It’s not written here because it is the worst word in the English language, one that should never be printed or spoken. Besides its use to demean and dehumanize African Americans in general, it was often the last word heard by a black man about to be lynched, or today, beaten or shot by a racist cop.

Director Peck obtained permission from the Baldwin family to use the author’s 1979 30-page letter to his literary agent describing an uncompleted project about race relations. The text of Baldwin’s letter, originally titled, “Remember This House,” is voiced by Samuel L. Jackson, the highest paid actor in Hollywood. The reference to the movie star’s wealth is to suggest that his participation in this project must, at least in part, be motivated by the realization that no matter how much money he has, as a black man, he can still hear that “famous word,” as I once heard it described.

The film employs historical footage of Baldwin talks and scenes from Selma to Ferguson to draw a chilling portrait of how race still defines America even so long after Baldwin’s death 30 years ago.

This isn’t a biopic. It opens with startling scenes from recent protests against police killings, but quickly defines the film’s touchstones—the murders of Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights activist, Medgar Evers, and Malcolm X, all of whom Baldwin counted as friends.

Baldwin, speaking through Jackson’s sonorous and dramatic reading, says he is embarking on a “journey to tell the truth.” This simple declaration in America is both subversive and revolutionary. To do so is to attack the fundamental myths of the nation that began as a slave republic, as we are reminded by essential historian Gerald Horne, and which enslaved and bred for slavery millions of human beings, as we are reminded by historians, Ned and Constance Sublette.

**T**he slavers had such a hand in writing the celebrated U.S. foundation document guaranteeing freedom (to some), but which also institutionalized slavery and set up an electoral mechanism for choosing a president that allowed the modern iteration of the Founding Slavers to recently assume the presidency.

The Slavocracy was so integral to the economy of the entire U.S., but particularly the South, that it waged a catastrophic civil war to maintain their “peculiar institution,” the echoes of which are still heard today every time a black person walks down the street.

You may say, “I know the same history as you do. I’m anti-



## WITH THE ELECTION OF DONALD TRUMP, WE ARE LIVING IN A MODERN VERSION OF A 1970s RHODESIA. A WHITE COLONIAL NATION BASED ON HORRORS THAT DREAMS OF AN IMAGINED GREATNESS THAT NEVER WAS.

racist.” You’re right. Maybe our readership is the wrong audience for the film although the drama of Baldwin’s words and Peck’s presentation is so intense, witnessing what we think we know is a stark reminder all of us can use.

The film would best be seen by the majority of Euro-Americans who have voted for Republican candidates for president since 1968 solely on the basis of race. However, they probably would have to be strapped to a chair, eyes forced open with clips, “A Clockwork Orange”-style, and forced to see the scenes in this film of their forebears, their historic counterparts, at lynchings, resisting integration in the 1950s, waving White Power signs and swastikas when Dr. King marched in Chicago in 1968, cheering militarized police attacking peaceful demonstrators, and advertisements featuring a slew of appalling Aunt Jemima-style ads.

The images should make those of us who are white—sad, angry, and ashamed, since regardless of our anti-racism, we are the beneficiaries of white supremacy. This is not said to instill guilt. Quite the opposite. It is a call to realize the obligation of the debt we owe by continuing our anti-racist work.

With the election of Donald Trump, we are living in a modern version of a 1970s Rhodesia. A white colonial nation based on horrors that dreams of an imagined greatness that never was. Slavery seemed like a bright idea to bring riches to a few, and an economy that involved millions profiting to some degree, but ignored the human toll.

The one chance for truth, reconciliation, and justice, was smashed following the end of the Reconstruction Era in 1877 by the same social forces which bolster white supremacy today.

The film comes at a time when Baldwin’s writing, received exceedingly well during his lifetime, but having gone into something of an eclipse, is experiencing a recent renaissance. His 1963, *The Fire Next Time*, spent 41 weeks on *The New York Times* best seller list and not only spoke for the organized civil rights movement, but also presaged the rebellions that, indeed, brought fire to a nation unwilling to bring about “liberty and justice for all.”

Baldwin’s work approached race and other forbidden topics beginning with his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*; a collection of essays, *Notes of a Native Son* appeared two years later. His second novel, *Giovanni’s Room*, caused some outrage because of its explicit homoerotic content. Others that followed, *Another Country* and *Tell Me How Long the Train’s Been Gone*, dealt with themes of being black and gay overlaid with the violence and unrest of the 1950s and ‘60s.

The footage of Baldwin speaking before primarily white audiences contains an electric sense of the period—everything

was then open for examination; anything could be changed. Everything *needed* to be examined and changed. But, the Rhodesians weren’t about to easily give up the world in which they ruled. They killed three men Baldwin loved and countless others just to keep separate drinking fountains and see other people as the word which will remain unwritten here.

There is much in “I am not. . .” about media representation of black people, from films like “King Kong” or the stereotype frightened or grinning Negroes in Charlie Chan films, TV series like “Amos and Andy,” and ads depicting happy servants. Visuals like this and the 10,000 collectibles in Prof. David Pilgrim’s Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, located at Michigan’s Ferris State University, are part of a contemptible cultural creation which attempted to convince both blacks and whites that the races were in correct relationship to one another.

The majority of whites still support the same policies of repression and believe the same myths. The overwhelming majority of blacks never did; almost none do today. This makes for an explosive social mixture.

It is worth the price of admission alone just to see Baldwin standing amidst a white audience at a 1965 Cambridge University debate declaring his humanity. In *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin asks the question, “Do I really *want* to be integrated into a burning house?”

The American Rhodesians are breathing their last. Many of their children want justice as an ethical imperative as much as black children want it as a practical imperative.

The only question that remains is, will the Rhodesians burn the house down on their way out?

Peter Werbe is a member of the *Fifth Estate* editorial collective. He recently was discharged from his long-time employment and plans to do more than clean out his garage. The books referenced above are Gerald Horne’s *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*, and *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave-Breeding Industry* by Ned and Constance Sublette.

**Visit the  
Fifth Estate Website**  
[www.FifthEstate.org](http://www.FifthEstate.org)

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More Than One Way To Query The Past,  
Many Questions to Ask

## Learning From The Complexities of History

**Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the Twentieth Century**

Andrew Cornell

University of California Press, 2016

**Nonviolence Ain't What It Used To Be: Unarmed Insurrection  
and the Rhetoric of Resistance**

Shon Meckfessel

AK Press, 2016

### F.O.F.

**R**eading about history with anarchist ideas in mind can often be inspiring and sometimes even lead to insights useful in present-day situations.

Andrew Cornell and Shon Meckfessel have written books that are treasure-troves of information about the multifaceted 20th century North American radical movements for societal change. They are helpful companions to the various memoirs and retrospectives on anarchist groups of the period published during the past decade by Anatole Dolgoff, Penelope Rosemont, Franklin Rosemont, Larry Gambone, Ben Morea, and others.

Cornell directly explores some of the lesser known relationships between anarchists of various tendencies, militant labor union activists, groups fighting against racism, cultural rebels, those fighting for women's, lesbian and gay (now more broadly including LGBTQ) liberation, as well as pacifists addressing when and how to employ non-violent methods of protest.

Concentrating on the first seven decades of the 20th century, he describes diverse anarchist groupings, including insurrectionist, anarchist-communist, anarcho-syndicalist, anarcho-pacifist and countercultural tendencies.

He outlines the growth of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) at the beginning of the century and its relationship to anarchists in the U.S., including the IWW's pioneering creative use of on-the-job direct action and the free speech movements, both providing important resources



—photo: Dennis Fox dennisfoxphoto.com

for later labor and social justice struggles. The role both the IWW and anarchists played in the anti-authoritarian rejection of Bolshevik subversion of the 1917 Russian revolution is touched on.

Cornell also briefly considers World War I and the post-war political repression of IWWs, anarchists and socialist groups along with attacks on African American communities which were occurring at the same time.

Meckfessel's book while not primarily focused on anarchist history as such, provides some highly relevant context through exploration of concerns of the other political movements and examination of the dynamic meanings of the demonstrations, riots and urban rebellions that created the background of the 1960s and 1970s.

**I**n considering riot as rhetoric, he discusses the focus in the 20th century insurgencies on demands for social justice compared with the concentration in the 21st century on breaking out of powerlessness.

Motivated by current debates about violence versus non-violence in activist circles, both Cornell and Meckfessel examine how these concepts were understood in the past and how they are represented in establishment and anarchist circles today.

While recognizing the importance of the ongoing discussion of this issue, there are also some other topics that these books bring to mind which deserve further examination.

For many in the movements of the mid-20th century, finding forms of organization that were appropriate to and reflected non-hierarchical means and ends was of prime importance. Cornell notes how anarchists indirectly contributed to ideas of egalitarian, decentralized organization in Black Freedom struggles during the late 1950s and 1960s, as well as



the ways that movement motivated anarchists to think more deeply about the intersections between class and racial oppression.

He also tantalizingly refers to the relationship between changes in class composition—which occurred at the beginning of the 20th century, in the 1920s and again after the Second World War—and the resulting changes in manifestations of resistance and rebellion.

Meckfessel notes the relationship between changes in class structure and increasing inequality that have contributed to growing government control and repression of expressions of dissatisfaction. Over time restructuring of the labor market also definitely has had a significant impact on who would be attracted to anarchist movements.

While the changing makeup and size of anarchist groups has caused disorientation and justifiable worries about isolation from the larger society, Meckfessel asserts that they have also provided opportunities for developing more egalitarian and liberatory relations between different groups opposing the status quo. He notes that diversity of goals and tactics can be understood as strengthening anti-authoritarian possibilities because of a multiplicity of self-definitions, even though posing severe ongoing challenges.

With this in mind, it is relevant to explore more deeply the differences and similarities in meanings between concepts of non-hierarchical anti-authoritarian methods of self-organiza-

tion in the past century and today.

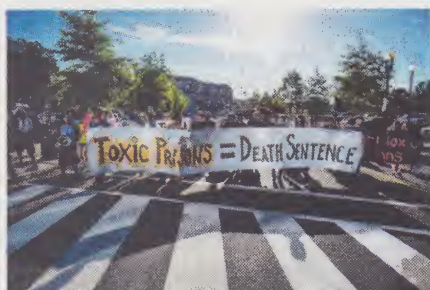
Many anarchists of the 1960s and 1970s era were not interested in either non-violence or armed struggle groups, but favored the kinds of self-defense they learned through their interactions with the IWW (as mentioned in memoirs and retrospectives and, remembered by many who have not recorded their experiences).

During the late 1960s through the beginning of the 1980s, the IWW helped to educate and encourage many young anarchists and anti-authoritarians who felt alienated from both pacifist and self-styled militaristic vanguards. Close examination of this experience could possibly shed further light on the emergence of later insurgencies, including but not limited to, connections with ecologically-concerned groups.

The conflicts between Marxist and anarchist ideas of the state, the genesis of revolutions, and struggles for national liberation also deserve further scrutiny in the context of the historical information and frames of reference developed by both Cornell and Meckfessel.

It is just possible that deeper discussions of these and related topics could contribute to a greater clarity about truly meaningful resistance in the future.

FOF is a long-time anarchist and friend of the FE, and is a friend of fossils, but not fixated on them.



2016 Washington DC march

## Texas Anti-Prison Gathering Set for June

A second Convergence Against Toxic Prisons will take place June 2-5 in Fort Worth, Tex., the city where the Carswell Federal Medical Center is located. The gathering will feature speakers, panels, workshops, protests and cultural activities, including an art show and hip-hop performances, and demonstrations.

A major focus of the convergence of prison abolition activists will be kicking off the Close Carswell Campaign. The

prison's special Administrative Unit is the current residence of prominent voices from the inside such as Marius Mason and Ana Belen Montes. The facility has faced years of scrutiny for its extremely restrictive policies and poor conditions which have never been addressed by the federal Bureau of Prisons.

This year's events are a continuation of those of last June, when activists and revolutionaries from across the country gathered in Washington D.C. to explore the intersections of the environmental movement and the struggle to end mass incarceration. (See FE, Winter 2017, "June 11<sup>th</sup>: Eco-Resistance, Prisons & the Making of an International Anarchist Day of Solidarity.") It highlighted the role of political and social prisoners in bringing this cross-movement analysis to the forefront.

Two hundred participants, including former prisoners, took to the streets of the Capitol with banners declaring support for those yet to win their freedom. They blocked the entrance to the Bureau of Prisons and then the major

intersection between the FBI and the Department of Justice.

"It was an amazing display of intersectional solidarity," says Panagioti Tsolkas, a convergence organizer. "And, we're doing it again this June, in Texas."

Why Texas?

Environmentalists know Texas as the financial headquarters of the oil and gas empire that controls the nation's political system, where fights against pipelines like Keystone XL and Trans-Pecos have captured the attention of the nation.

Prison abolitionists know Texas as home to one of the most brutal and corrupt state prison systems in the country.

The facility is designed to house female prisoners who have special health-related needs, but only a small percentage receive medical treatment. Over 1,500 prisoners are currently housed in Carswell which is surrounded by toxic military Superfund sites from the Air Force base with which it shares the area.

Site information and a list of events is available at [FightToxic-Prisons.org](http://FightToxic-Prisons.org), and [facebook.com/events/641359922717062](https://facebook.com/events/641359922717062).



Alexander Berkman (with cane) with comrades including Becky Edelson and Louise Berger. Anarchists 100 years ago dressed up a little more than today's.



## Some thoughts on Alexander Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* by an imprisoned anarchist

### *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*

Alexander Berkman

Annotated and Introduction by Jessica Moran & Barry Pateman  
AK Press, 2017, (Originally published: 1912), 550 pp.  
akpress.org

### MARIUS MASON

"Thick clouds of smoke over cast the sky, shrouding the morning with somber gray. The air is heavy with soot and cinders; the smell is nauseating. In the distance, giant furnaces vomit pillars of fire, the lurid flashes accentuating a line of frame structures, dilapidated and miserable. . . The sight fills me with hatred of the perverse social order that turns the needs of mankind into an Inferno of brutalizing toil (that) grinds flesh and blood into iron and steel, transmutes human lives into gold, gold, countless gold."

This vision could describe my old neighborhood near Zug Island in Detroit, home of the Ford Rouge Plant and United States Steel. Instead, it is Alexander Berkman's impression of Pittsburgh in 1892, as he disembarks from a train.

At 21, he has already committed to perhaps ending his life in an extreme action to be taken on behalf of the striking workers at Andrew Carnegie's Homestead Steel Works. The manager, Henry Clay Frick, brought in 300 ruthless Pinkerton private police to break the strike.

Berkman fails in an attempt to assassinate Frick at his office and is arrested. The strike was lost and the workers' union broken.

Berkman wrote the prison memoirs following his release after serving 14 years of the 22 year sentence for the action. The critical questions he raises about his experience and the rationale for both the action and his ideals, remain relevant today.

The new edition includes material from Berkman's diaries and letters, plus annotations which expand on what he writes

giving the book a different feel than the version I read some 20 years ago. This one brings you closer to the history of the time, both for Berkman's intimate circle and for the surrounding society.

When I first read it, I had never been in prison nor did I have any reason to think I ever would. Still, like most of my anarchist peers, I felt it was important to offer support and reading material to incarcerated comrades. Now, having spent eight years on the other side of those walls, I understand just how important those acts of support are, and so did Berkman.

He writes, having received a letter from his friend, Emma Goldman: "The bars fade, the walls disappear, and the air grows sweet with the aroma of fresh air and flowers. I am again with you, walking in the July moonlight."

In the book's opening sections, Berkman explains his motivation for attempting to kill Frick, and his frustration at being misunderstood and having failed. But his words describing his relationship to Goldman (referred to as "the girl") and his ever-increasing relationships in the prison use a different tone.

As the revolutionary, he is strident and confident. As the human being, he questions and considers, he changes his mind and admits when his judgment was in error.

At one point, Berkman quotes a conversation with a comrade and refers to himself as a revolutionary first, and then a man. This perspective suggests the phrase, "the righteous few" coined by Jonathan Matthew Smucker in *Hegemony How-To* (another excellent book by AK Press). It plays a big role in the sense that it was not only appropriate, but necessary for a cadre of revolutionaries to act on behalf of the workers. The small affinity group that Berkman, Goldman, and Modest Stein belonged to took this idea as a driving force in their lives.

Having only read a newspaper account of the strike, Berkman still felt compelled to take this as an opportunity and even as a duty to go to Pittsburgh and respond. The idea being that the action would spur the workers into further resistance if they felt supported in their efforts by the anarchists taking on Frick and Carnegie.

But even contemporaries sympathetic to Berkman, his cause, and his Ideal, were not persuaded by his arguments



Western Pennsylvania Warden Wright looks on as workers uncover the tunnel intended for Alexander Berkman's escape in 1900. The story of the attempted break out is in Fifth Estate, March 2008, [fifthestate.org/archive/377-march-2008/tony-revealed/](http://fifthestate.org/archive/377-march-2008/tony-revealed/)

when they first read the manuscript. Voltairine De Cleyre, a friend of Berkman's after his arrest, a long-time prison correspondent, and anarchist writer, poet, and organizer in her own right, believed that the casual reader would think Berkman was crazy.

De Cleyre disagreed with the tactic and its explanation, but maintained her solid support for Berkman nonetheless both at the time of his arrest and after. Support was divided among the many well-known anarchist proponents of the time, with Johann Most condemning it (much to Berkman's chagrin and Goldman's rage). Some of the most moving passages of the memoir are not the high-flying rhetoric of the young and idealistic Berkman, but the many conversations between him and individual strikers and prisoners that he records in what is meant to be colloquial language.

Berkman notes how certain guards and prisoners look for opportunities to indulge in senseless cruelty. It is painful to read about the incidents that Berkman witnesses, the sound of clubs on human bodies, the screams and cries for medical aid that does not come, the constant begging for medicines that don't leave their patients even sicker.

Things are better now than in Berkman's time and yet a cursory reading of *Prison Legal News* will tell you that these abuses still occur.

More than the infrequent, but terrifying violence, Berkman describes the desolation of the human spirit that comes with isolation in the solitary units, from years away from sweethearts and family, that separates a prisoner from the free expression of their affectionate or sexual nature. This twists the prisoner's responses, sometimes permanently.

Berkman treats the subject of consensual and exploitative sexuality in the prison with sensitivity and care. For its time, it was unusually positive towards homosexuality, a practice that prison staffs took care to deny existed at all.

Berkman's memoir continues with his release from prison and re-entry into society. He notes how different it is for him having the support of a community and resolves to pay this back by writing his story and doing a lecture series.

He writes that the only reason he survived his time in prison (he alludes to at least one possible suicide attempt), is that he was sustained in his suffering in solitary and in the dungeon by his beliefs.

He writes:

"It was the vision of an ideal, the consciousness that I suffered for a great Cause. It was my duty to exemplify the spirit and dignity of the ideas it embodied. I was not a prisoner, merely; I was an Anarchist".



Despite what were painful months adjusting to free life, Berkman begins to enjoy walks in the woods again and conversations with political allies without the shroud of prison cutting him off from others. He even falls in love. The diaries tell us this part of his life as a free man, written with a funny and irreverent perspective, whereas the earlier part of the memoir is much more didactic.

The comments on the constant nature of jealousy, even among the proponents of polyamory and free love, are written with a wry and warm insider's view. One is able to see Berkman as much a man as a revolutionary. It is this balance that makes his story more accessible and poignant to those of us reading his words in this century.

More than anything, this story of survival and recovery, of reconnection and responsibility to one's beliefs, is a morality tale for us now. Prison experience changes who you are fundamentally and haunts you.

I will carry the prison around in my mind for the rest of my life. But I am encouraged that perhaps, even so, like Alexander Berkman, I will continue to find the strength, direction, and purpose of my cause both here in prison and in whatever future free life I might have. This fills me with courage and peace.

There aren't a lot of books that can do that for you.

Marius Mason is an anarchist, environmental and animal rights activist currently serving nearly 22 years, like Berkman, in federal prison for acts of property damage carried out in defense of the planet.

He is believed to be the first FtM prisoner to win the right to hormone therapy to treat gender dysphoria.

Marius can receive letters addressed to:

Marie (Marius) Mason #04672-061  
FMC Carswell, P.O. Box 27137  
Fort Worth TX 76127





## Sasha on an iPhone

### Abigail Child's New Emma Goldman Film Merges Anarchist History with Present Struggles

**Acts and Intermissions: Emma Goldman in America**

2017. USA. Directed by Abigail Child  
57 min. [abigailchild.com](http://abigailchild.com)

**BILL MEYER**

Abigail Childs is a prolific and active visual artist whose works have appeared in prestigious international galleries; an author of five poetry books, including a book of critical writings on film; and a professor of video/film production and history.

She is a recipient of several awards including the Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, and a creator of dozens of films, with her latest being a short narrative about anarchist Emma Goldman.

For *Acts and Intermissions: Emma Goldman in America*, she serves as director, camera person and editor. This semi-experimental production is more grounded in traditional film structure compared to Child's previous free-form experimental projects.

Starting with a title card that states "as far as consciousness is concerned, reality

is determinant," the film immediately juxtaposes contemporary scenes of protests in vivid color with 19th Century black and white images of Emma in her youth (played by a haunting Miriam Rocek), implying that the realities of both disparate times are not really that different.

The intermixing of past and present protest footage is used to not only show that the struggles of the past still exist, but to draw a new audience to the life and teachings of America's most well known anarchist.

Emma's voiceover laments, "It's impossible to fully live the life of an anarchist in the present conditions," referencing her times in America from the years 1885 up to 1919 when she was deported to Russia after two years in prison for opposing the World War I draft. These are the years covered in this visually creative history lesson.

Born in Lithuania, Emma's father wanted to marry her off at the age of 16. She preferred to leave for the shores of America, to "dance herself to death,"

after an experience of unrequited love. She landed in New York in 1885 quickly immersing herself in the struggles of the working class, brought to life in carefully selected archival footage of yarn mills, street markets and political protests accompanied by contemporary music, once again drawing attention to the parallels of the two epochs.

It was the 1886 Haymarket Affair in Chicago that politicized the already engaged activist. Eight policemen were killed and eight anarchist leaders arrested without evidence.

She proclaims, "I was cooked in the heat of injustice. I had found my life task." She begins her life as a fiery speaker repelled by injustice and the quest for freedom. "What I had instead of talent was a quiet frenzy that could not be accommodated."

But it was the 1892 Homestead Strike that brought Goldman and her lover Alexander "Sasha" Berkman closer together. Without the help of an organized group, they plan an "action" to assassinate oppressive factory manager, Henry Clay Frick, and start a workers revolution.

Emma writes, "Love is a play with short acts and long intermissions," obviously referring to the years of separation from her imprisoned lover, Berkman, who was sentenced to 22 years for the failed assassination attempt. Goldman also had sessions of imprisonment over the years, for inciting riots, and for her vocal disbelief in god and government, further disrupting her love life.

The police force her out of her apartment and workers denounce her violent and non-collective approach to social change. Among the odd jobs she acquires while on the run is seamstress at a brothel, where she advances her theories on sexuality and free love.

She proclaims "the institution of marriage makes a parasite of woman," al-



though troubled by her lovers' escapades with other women. At 26, Emma travels to Europe to meet with leading anarchists. She studies midwifery, sits in on Freud's lectures, and attends the theater of Ibsen and Chekhov, and has an unfulfilling lesbian affair in Paris.

Upon return to the US, she proclaims, "love was like anarchism – a compelling yet ultimately distant promise." So, she dives back into political action, lives through President McKinley's 1901 assassination, and is stopped from speaking 11 times in one year following the act by a self-proclaimed anarchist.

But it was the uncontrollable parts of her personal life she kept secret. Tied up with free speech, birth control, and the free love movement that was an essential part of every radical social movement, she was, like many, conflicted by the use of violence, and by free love vs monogamy. Publicly she was active and moving, but privately she was often in despair.

By 1916 war fever is everywhere. An-

archists are rounded up for their opposition to enlistment and violent anti-war tactics. "Power is crap, that's why I'm an anarchist," she writes.

After 34 years in the country, Emma and Sasha, charged under the 1917 Espionage Act, are among the first to be raided, rounded up and deported from the land they had hoped would be a model of freedom and justice. Continuing the connection to the present, the film notes it's the same law used against whistleblowers Ellsberg, Manning, and Snowden.

The film is kept interesting not only by Emma's fascinating life, but by the unpredictable filmic techniques utilized by the creative direction of an artist trained in many disciplines – cinema verite, archival footage juxtaposed with contemporary scenes (rallies, protests); hypnotic slow pans, multi-screen, split screen, color and b&w, varied aspect ratio, negative images, and superimposition.

At times it felt like an assault of im-

ages with technique overpowering the story. At one exhausting point, while Emma languishes in prison, there's a Brechtian pause as the title states: "Stay put story—while I go get some other images." Emma eventually returns refortified with a renewed interest and celebratory status as the "Queen" of anarchists as demonstrated in visuals of current anti-capitalist protests.

Child offers a personalized semi-experimental treatment with sound editing utilizing a kaleidoscope of varied musical styles intermixed with street and sound effects.

Although the fake Russian accent of Emma's voiceovers is somewhat annoying, you should enjoy this creative storytelling about the "World's Most Dangerous Anarchist." Especially if you're an anarchist!

Bill Meyer is a cultural activist living in Hamtramck, Mich. He has written his Progressive Cinema column for over 30

## Black & Green Celebrates 17th Anniversary with New Issue of Its Review

**Black and Green Review #4, Winter 2016**  
[BlackAndGreenPress.org](http://BlackAndGreenPress.org), 214pp, \$10

Kevin Tucker started the Black and Green Network in 2000 to create a centralized place where green anarchist and anarcho-primitivist projects, both nationally and internationally, could connect. After years of successful gatherings, Tucker launched *Black and Green Review* (BGR) which he co-edits with five others.

The magazine's Cassandra-like warnings about the collapse of eco-systems appear closer than ever, but BGR doesn't take pleasure in what they and others predicted. Tucker writes, "We are fighting to defend and foster wild existence through grounding within passionate resistance."

This battle is expressed admirably in BAGR #4 with a strong opening editorial by Tucker where he frighteningly says we are "...at the end of this dying civilization." No more time for empty discussions. We know the enemy, he tells us.

Grim. Why bother with anything if we're all doomed to a planet burned to crisp and overcome by rising tides? The writers inside BAGR aren't giving up. In the "Field Notes from the Primal War" section, they chronicle the campaigns against the carnage that civilization and technology has created in-

cluding articles about struggles against pipelines.

The interesting "Discussions" sections features essays by Tucker and one by Zerzan, "Meaning in the Age of Nihilism," along with Ian Smith and Sine Cultis. There are "Essays" and "Reviews" sections giving expression to both the depth of despair, but also a willingness to fight it out to the end; hopefully not the planet's.

## MORE PRISON NEWS

Green Scare prisoner Rebecca Rubin was released from a halfway house in April. According to the Earth First! Newswire, Rubin was sentenced in 2014 to five years in federal prison for numerous Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front action including the arsons of Vail Ski Resort and US Forest Industries, and liberating horses from and burning down Bureau of Land Management facilities in California and Oregon.

Rubin was a fugitive in Canada for a decade, but surrendered in 2013, pleaded guilty, but did so as a non-cooperating defendant. Her surprisingly light sentence came at the hands of a liberal federal judge who also ordered her to write a review of a Malcolm Gladwell pop culture book.

[earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/](http://earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/)



# Letters

Continued from Page Two



## NO COPYRIGHT

I have translated some of Peter Lam-born Wilson's *Fifth Estate* writings into Brazilian Portuguese. I especially like "Anarchist Religion?" (Summer 2010, FE #383) for the funny and magical chronicle occurring in Recife, the city where I'm from, besides several other interesting local references, e.g. Umbanda, Exús, etc.

I would like to learn about the copyright policies of *Fifth Estate* to know if I could use the translation in a non-commercial, non-profit, local, anarchist affinity magazine, eventually registered with ISBN, or even in my own personal blog.

**José Paulo Maldonado de Souza**  
Recife, Brazil

**Fifth Estate reply:** We hold no formal copyright on any of our published material. In our masthead on page three, we state: "No copyright. Kopimi (which expressed verbally says, Copy Me) – reprint freely," and displays a Circle K, the universal sign for no reprint restriction.

We publish this partly as critique of publishing as property, but also that we want our ideas to flow freely. However, a copyright notice isn't necessary to gain the state's protection of intellectual property since, as we wrote in an article about the subject, "copyright is now automatic upon creation and neither registration nor display of the copyright symbol is necessary." See "Copyright or Wrong?," FE 385, Fall 2011.

To read it online, visit the archive on our website: [fifthestate.org/archive/](http://fifthestate.org/archive/). Navigate to 385, Fall 2011. Then look for the link to the full article, "Copyright or Wrong?." (Or, you can type the title, with quotation marks, into an FE search box.)

## CARTER'S DRAFT

Your article, "A New Right for Women: Eligible for the U.S. War Machine," in the Winter 2017 issue, reminded me of our campaign against Jimmy Carter's draft in San Diego.

A fairly broad coalition tried to leaflet every post office in the county during the two weeks folks were supposed to go there to sign their lives over to the war machine. It's a conservative county and a big one, a few hundred post offices at the time, so we didn't make it. But we had a presence at about a hundred post offices, and many were covered every day. At some, leafletters asked young men to think about it before registering; we urged outright refusal.

For all the government's propaganda and threats, they only got about half of San Diego's draft-age men to register.

Lots of young men came to register, talked to us, and went home saying they weren't willing to enroll in the machinery of war. Some folks were hostile, of course—we had to abandon one post office when a gun-toting thug threatened to shoot the lone leafletter on duty—but overall the reception was pretty good.

In general, I've found lots of people receptive to anarchist ideas when presented with something concrete they can do (or, as in this case, refuse to do). The bosses and their state rely on force, not reason.

**Jon Bekken**  
Philadelphia

**Fifth Estate reply:** Ol' Jimmy Carter, so beloved by liberals, re-instated the draft in 1980 claiming it was a response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. To his credit, he pardoned hundreds of thousands of men who evaded the draft during the Vietnam War.

In total, some 100,000 young Americans went abroad in the late 1960s and

early '70s to avoid serving in the war. Ninety percent went to Canada, while others hid inside the United States.

In addition, about 1,000 military deserters from the U.S. armed forces went to Canada and Sweden. The U.S. continued to prosecute draft evaders after the war ended. A total of 209,517 men were formally accused of violating draft laws, while government officials estimate another 360,000 were never formally accused.

By 2010, the government estimated there is a 92 percent registration rate with the names and addresses of over 16.2 million men on file. However an audit found that 20–40 percent of the addresses on file were outdated, and up to 75 percent for those registrants in their last year of potential eligibility to be drafted were invalid.

## THAT POSTER AGAIN

Back in the early '70s, I was a subscriber to the *Fifth Estate*. I was a kid. I lived in East Detroit at the time. In 1975, I moved to New Mexico. Kept getting the paper.

I'm mailing the vintage "Fuck Authority poster that you included in one of your 1976 issues. It has put in many hard years hanging and being re-hung on various walls of mine, and it looks like it!

I'm donating it back to you so you can hang it on your wall. I've had it 40+ years! It's time for it to go back home.

**Ken Bush**  
Santa Fe

**FE replies:** Thanks, Ken! We wish we would have had it for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition. We had a pristine copy on the wall of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, but this one has the feel of use, which is exactly what it was intended for.

## CORRECT

Civilization is bad for the planet. Well, I won't let it spoil my life or my FUN!!!! I'll still protest. Thanx for the prediction.

**Brian Taylor**  
Cleveland





## Reports from campaigns to save the planet It's all connected

Continued from Page 3

to be massive reductions in greenhouse emissions before 2020. But, there are no significant changes in this direction because the worldwide industrial capitalist system is one that primarily engenders and rewards continued profit maximization and monopoly of wealth and power.

Without societal transformations involving major shifts in who makes decisions about the conditions of everyday life and the ways in which decisions are made, the downward spiral for the majority of the world's inhabitants and the increasing degradation of the planet can't be stopped.

The environmental crises are forcing people everywhere to focus on the roots of oppression and exploitation, reject hierarchies of domination, and figure out in the here-and-now how to create projects that can work toward making the world a truly more egalitarian and enjoyable place for all.

The extraction, transport and use of fossil fuels have long been a focus of resistance by environmental activists and native tribal peoples. These two groups have now begun to cooperate directly, and they are being joined by more and more people from all walks of life. Over the last year, massive mobilizations and

blockages of all sorts have intensified across the world.

In the fall of 2016, as corporate plans for plundering of more difficult to reach stores of gas and oil moved ahead, so too did popular resistance and obstruction.

Blocking the current and future flow of hydrocarbons became the major goal of a variety of groups in at least ten U.S. states, several Canadian provinces, and in Mexico.

Most prominent were the massive efforts in North Dakota to halt completion of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The activities of thousands of water protectors, including native people, environmental activists and other concerned individuals and groups, interrupted construction for weeks. They were even joined by 2,000 U.S. military veterans who came to oppose brutalization of the protesters by private and public security forces.

The Obama administration, in its last days, tried to quiet protests by canceling permissions and offering alternative pipeline routes. To nobody's surprise, the incoming Trump administration reversed this, and fully approved all work for the completion of DAPL. The water protectors have vowed to continue the struggle.

Though less noticed, opposition to climate and environment-degrading actions are being undertaken in many other parts of Turtle Island as well.

In early October, ten people, known collectively as Climate Direct Action, were arrested for attempting to halt the flow of all tar sands oil coming into the U.S. from Canada by manually turning off pipeline valves in Washington State, Minnesota, Montana, and North Dakota.

In Washington State, starting in early November, and lasting almost two weeks, a group of protesters at the port of Olympia blocked a train shipment of material required for oil fracking in North Dakota. It began with a single person blocking the tracks, but soon grew to an encampment of nearly a hundred; they organized informal assemblies and engaged in direct self-governance.

In North Florida, starting in early November and continuing into 2017, activists of the Springs Not Pipelines! action camp created multiple blockades to halt work on the Sabal Trail natural gas pipeline. The region is the home of Seminole and Miccosukee people, containing the highest concentration of fresh water springs in the world. If this pipeline is completed, it will carry fracked gas through Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, threatening wildlife and water sources.

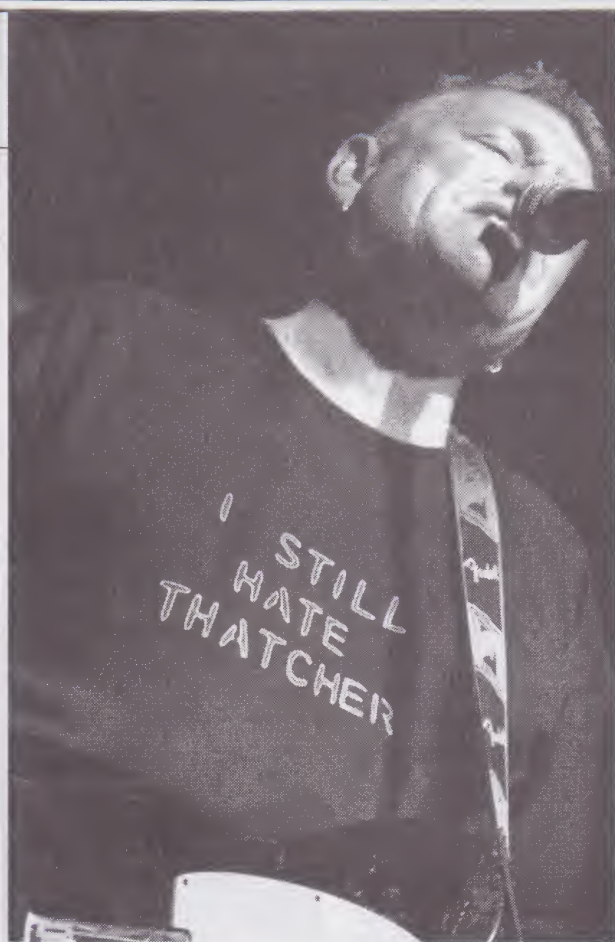
In Louisiana, resistance is growing to the Bayou Bridge fracked oil pipeline, which is planned to run directly through the Atchafalaya Basin, the world's largest natural swamp, crossing 600 acres of wetlands and 700 bodies of water, endangering wildlife, including fish and shellfish, as well as the water supply for 300,000 families.

This is only a partial list. Space will not allow us to describe all that is currently going on. And, given the Trump administration's support for projects to increase extraction, transport and use of fossil fuels, there will certainly be more coming soon.

Updates on these struggles can be found at the websites of the *Earth First! Journal* ([earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/](http://earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/)) and *Its Going Down* ([itsgoingdown.org/](http://itsgoingdown.org/)).

For updates on Sabal Trail, visit [sabal-trailresistance.wordpress.com](http://sabal-trailresistance.wordpress.com)





## ROBB JOHNSON A Singer/Songwriter You May Never Have Heard Of, But Should

where in England, Scotland or Wales, sometime between 1986 and the present.

Robb Johnson is the quintessential great songwriter you've never heard of. The one that proves the whole record industry is full of shit, among other industries.

Why was "Anarchy in Hackney" not on the Billboard charts? Why doesn't "At the Siege of Madrid" appear in all the high school textbooks as a teaching aid for that lesson on the Spanish Civil War? (You know, that one.) Well, you know why.

But now, at least, Robb's music will not only be known on the fringes of the British punk and folk scenes, but on the fringes of the anarchist scene in the US, as well. And, who knows what's next.

To put Robb into some kind of warped, personal context, as a teenager I liked Bob Dylan a lot. I still do. But I just assumed the media hype I grew up with must be true, that Dylan was the best politically-oriented (at least for a few records) songwriter the English language managed to produce.

Then, at the age of 19, I hitch-hiked from San Francisco to Seattle, went to the Pike Place Market, and was completely blown away by a guy named Jim Page, who was busking there.

That was in the 1980s. It wasn't until more than a decade later, on my first tour of England, that I discovered Robb.

It was one of those inevitable discoveries for a politically-oriented songwriter touring the folk clubs of England to make. Probably one in three people I stayed with, after attending my show, asked me if I had heard of Robb.

And, regularly subjected to Robb's CDs as I was on that tour, I was happy

to discover that this was far from an unpleasant experience. On the contrary, I was hooked. Like Jim Page, Robb writes at least as well as Dylan, but with more authentic emotion and much better politics.

Robb has documented his life and times from the 1980s to the present, always with chilling insight, often with humor, sometimes with an old-school punk band, oftentimes with just voice and guitar.

He is a master of the instrument, particularly with his intricate fingerstyle playing, reminiscent of other masters of the technique like Jim Page or Alistair Hulett.

In addition to songs about his times, from Thatcher's reign to Thatcher's death ("Ding Dong Thatch"), to the fall of the Soviet Union ("Breakfast In Chemnitz") to Blair and Cameron's foreign wars and the resistance to them ("I Am Not At War"), the box set includes a whole CD's worth of Robb's gorgeous songs about love, childhood ("Real Cool Purple Shirt"), and parenthood – some of which also manage to include World War I history in them, among other things ("When Harry Took Me To See Ypres").

Taken as a whole, you'll get an excellent primer on some of the more notable events of the 20th century from this collection.

OK, now go look him up on YouTube. But if you still have a CD player and you got an extra \$45, the full-on Robb Johnson binge via PM Press is way better.

David Rovics is a Portland, Oregon-based singer/songwriter and anarchist. His many songs and albums, and his current touring schedule for the U.S. and Europe is at [DavidRovics.com](http://DavidRovics.com)

**A Reasonable History of Impossible Demands: The Damage to Date 1986-2013**  
Robb Johnson

92 songs on 5 CDs with 64-page booklet  
PM Press, 2015, [pmpress.org](http://pmpress.org)

### DAVID ROVICS

At a time when independent publishers and record labels are going out of business at a rapid rate, PM Press keeps on putting out books, pamphlets, videos, and various other things – including CDs.

One of their most recent releases is a 5-CD box set retrospective containing close to 100 songs by singer/songwriter, Robb Johnson, titled "A Reasonable History of Impossible Demands."

If you are a Robb Johnson fan, you'd immediately recognize the box set's title from one of Robb's songs, the chorus of which echoes the Situationist slogan from the revolutionary May/June days of Paris 1968.

But, you have probably never heard of Robb Johnson unless you happen to have grown up on the fringes of the punk and/or folk music scene some-



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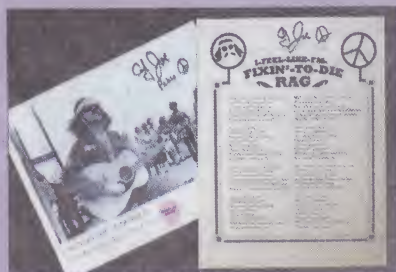


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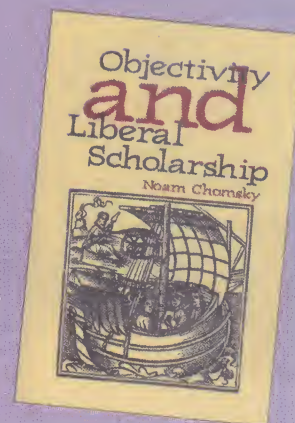
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